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WELCOME

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THE CAPTURE OF WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN A BRITISH BOAT-CAUGHT record bass at a time when anglers could not keep this species raises a number of questions.

Charter skipper Lee Hall boated and released a 20lb bass (see page 29) off the Isle of Wight, but cannot claim the official record because the fish had to be returned.

With catch and release from January 1 to February 29 and again in December this year, could the fish have been weighed at sea and sufficient evidence provided to meet rules laid down by the British Record committee? If caught when retention was allowed, what would have been the reaction to the potential killing of such a superb fish?

Therefore, is the British record list still fit for purpose? Yes, there is a notable fish list, but boat anglers are at a serious disadvantage when seeking to claim a record. What will happen if a "no boarding" rule is ever adopted for shark fishing?

BAIT RESTRICTION

Anglers are facing other restrictions, too, in the form of limits on collecting bait. If approved, it will apply to the Devon and Severn area only, but could it be expanded to other parts of the country?

There would be permits for commercial diggers, while anglers would be strictly limited to the amount of bait they could collect. Anglers who gather bait and sell it to other people would not be eligible for such a permit. All diggers could be denied access to some sensitive sites. Of course, enforcement of this is another matter.

Anglers who are aware of this move by Devon & Severn IFCA fear it will force up bait prices. There are a few days left in the consultation period, so you have time to make your views known (page 33).

For those interested in tuna, you may have heard that Ireland's floy-tagging programme for bluefins will be extended this year from July 1 to November 20. Currently, there is a small-scale satellite tagging scheme in the UK, but campaigners are pressing for an Irish-style scheme. There are also moves to seek a tuna quota for recreational anglers (page 70).

THE BIG EVENT

Some of you reading this may be taking part in the big European Open Beach Championship on the Holderness Coast from March 6-8. Sea Angler will be there, so I hope to see you.

I'm sure there will be a big turnout for what is also a major social gathering. However, some people who contact me feel it could be even bigger. Accommodation at the headquarters is usually sold out several months before the event and some of those visiting from further afield struggle to find alternative accommodation nearby. The event began as a way of attracting people outside the main holiday season, so it's in everyone's interest to promote alternative places to stay.

Should there be a designated area for disabled anglers? Of course, the nature of this crumbling coastline makes it difficult for the less agile to get on many of the beaches. It's difficult to please everyone, but accessibility and weigh-in deadlines for the disabled should be considered at all large-scale rovers. We really shouldn't deter anglers from taking part.

GREAT ISSUE

There is plenty of great reading in this issue, including Mike Thrussell's look at pier fishing (page 6) and another humorous contribution from bass angler 'Leakyboots' (page 18). We've also included plenty of reader catch success stories (starting on page 29).

We have two top skippers – Dave Roberts and Sam Cumming – revealing what to expect this spring in the Bristol Channel (page 54) and English Channel (page 58). We've also got Dave Barham writing about a great day out on the Humber (page 62).

Finally, the winner of the Icon M-Sport rod competition (issue 579) was Steven Walker, of Willerby. Enjoy the magazine. *Cliff Brown, editor*

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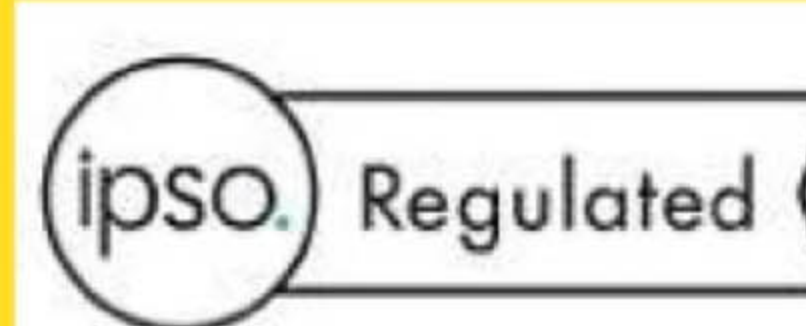
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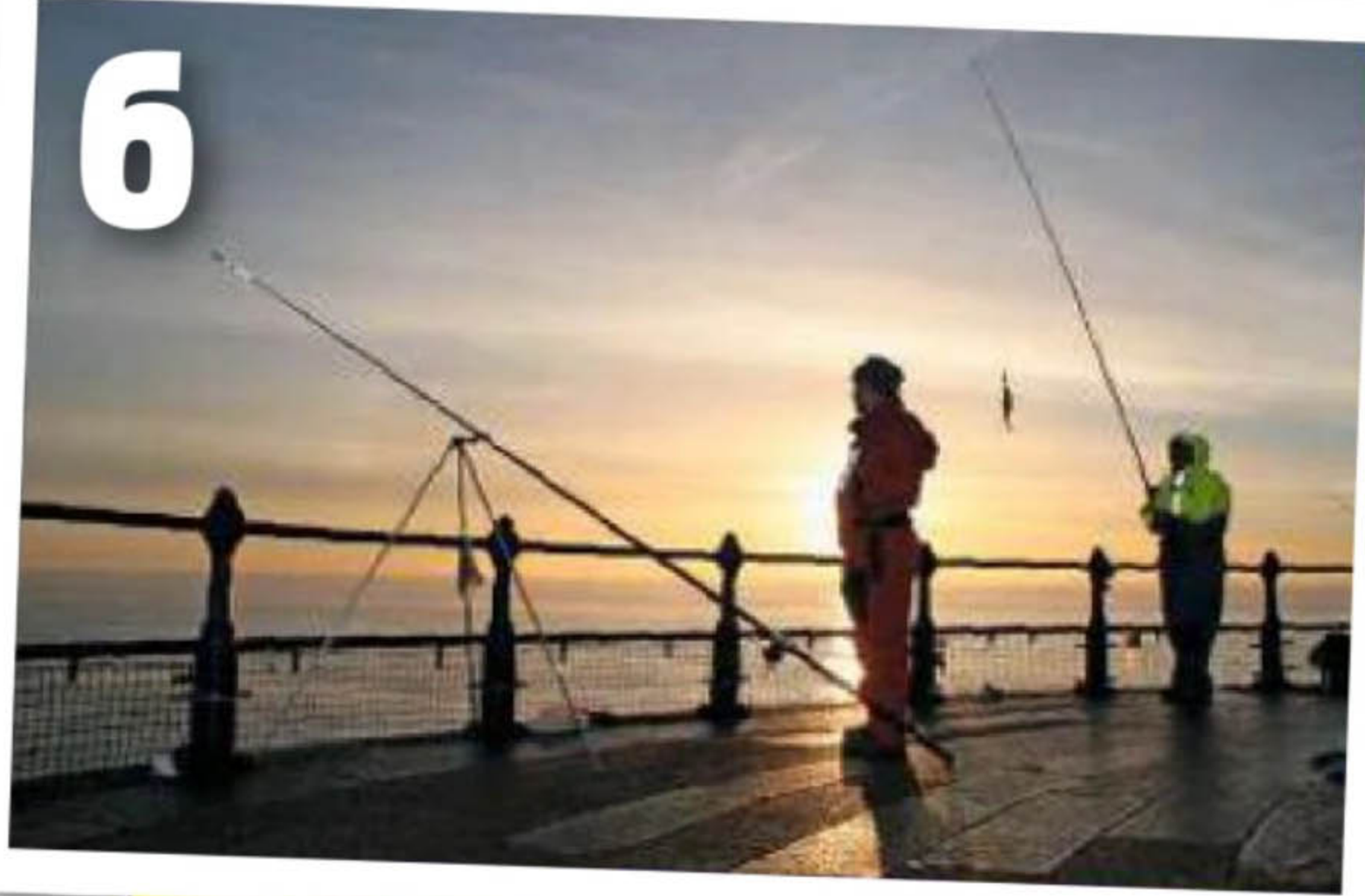
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Man-made magic

As structures where many anglers begin their fishing, breakwaters, jetties and piers all offer superb opportunities





ONE OF THE FIRST MAN-MADE structures I fished, when I was about eight, was the quay wall in Whitby. I remember catching small coalies, dabs, tiny whiting and codling in between the boats. I soon learned that most of the fish were either under the shadow of a boat or tight into the wall.

When we moved to Wales, my chances to fish man-made structures were suddenly limited due to lack of transport. My nearest 'proper' pier was more than 40 miles away, while the harbours locally mostly dried up either side of low water.

As a result, I came to fish breakwaters,

piers and jetties quite a bit later in life. In some ways, that was a good thing because I already had a basic grounding in what to look for and try. I still made the same mistake most do, in that I headed for the farthest seaward point of any structure and put my full weight behind the cast for maximum range. This inconsistent-at-best tactic cost me a lot of fish until the penny dropped and I realised I needed a far more logical approach.

It raises the question, though – if you're new to fishing man-made structures, how do you read the ground features when they are hidden underwater, what fish are where, and how best can you fish them for immediate success? ▶

Breakwater piers, like South Shields (above) are features of estuaries and harbours

HOW TO FISH BREAKWATERS

Although most breakwaters are constructed to better protect the more exposed harbours, they can be used to create new anchorages across semi-sheltered bays.

The big advantage is, they are likely to be increased in size and shape over the next few decades to help combat rising sea levels. Equally likely is they'll be constructed in much bigger numbers, too, all around the UK and Irish coast, to better protect coastal communities at risk from potential coastal flooding, but also to act as restrictive barriers to protect properties and agricultural land further inland. This could mean more opportunities for sea anglers.

Breakwaters are sometimes made from tetrapods, basically four-limbed star shapes of concrete that interlock to form a construction base that allows water to flow around it, helping to dissipate its force and protect the main breakwater construction.

The other main breakwater build is to use large chunks of rock or concrete that loosely fit together to form the foundations. A flat concrete walkaway is then added on the top. In both cases it leaves holes below the water line that become home to a wide range of fish.

Because breakwaters are used to create shelter by breaking the force of bigger seas, you'll often find that there is heavy, rough ground extending well beyond the foundation of the breakwater on the main seaward side. Some of this is man-made, some of it created by the scouring-out action of the sea swell. Such ground is the obvious place to target congers, bull huss and cod.

If you want consistent fishing, seek out the roughest ground you can (where other anglers won't fish) and target this area. The fish tend to become much more territorial here and will be available in better numbers. This especially applies to huss and congers. You'll also get the occasional good pollack on both bait and lures because this ground is often neglected and they get a chance to grow bigger.

The inner side of the breakwater usually has much cleaner ground due to the tide and sea swell being more restricted. Longer-term sediment deposition also has an effect. Often, it is fairly flat. Sometimes you'll find rising sandbanks created by boat channels or tidal action, and these can produce plaice and maybe rays. Beyond a few dabs and whiting, though, that's all you'll commonly catch by casting out to this ground.

INCREASED OPTIONS

The options increase massively once you realise that the bulk of the fish are tight in among the holes in the tetrapods and rocks. You'll catch fish by locating the base of the rocks and dropping your baits here. Bigger offerings will find conger eels, but it can be a difficult job to stop them getting back into their holes and breaking you off.

Big ballan wrasse live in the holes between the rocks too, and these can be drawn out by



Plenty of space to fish – this is Roker pier at Sunderland



Mixed tactics on the inside edge of Holyhead breakwater



float-fishing worm and crab baits over the top of the submerged rocks, but again this is hit-and-hold fishing, albeit very productive.

A huge number of smaller species, such as goldsinny, corkwing and rock-cook wrasse, small pollack, small coalies, shannies, a multitude of gobies, sand smelts and sea scorpions, to name a few, plus rarer species such as topknot and leopard spotted gobies, can also be caught inside the rocks. This is the territory of the LRF angler fishing lighter 6-7ft rods with 8lb braid and light hooklengths ending in smaller-sized hooks between 12 and even size 20, depending on what you're targeting.

Look for deeper holes between the rocks and concrete and drop the bait into these. The knack is to fish light with just enough weight to keep the bait gradually moving as the sea swell pushes between the rocks.

React quickly to bites when they come, and keep the fish coming once hooked. Top baits are tiny bits of ragworm, maddies, or

tiny slivers of mackerel or squid.

Another good tip when checking out a breakwater is to look for any constructional angles or directional changes in its length. These will deflect the tide a little and create seabed configurations that provide a more varied habitat for a wider range of species.

Also look to fish down the side of ladders set into the concrete wall, as these again give protection to smaller fish. The ends of breakwaters deflect the tide, and this often produces a current of tide flowing past, which will be a hotspot for bass, garfish and mackerel hunting for sandeels.

In some areas of the country, breakwaters are formed from old rubble, some of it excavated from bomb sites. Others are just waste stone. These get covered in mud, sand and weed and tend to lay across the tide or are positioned to deflect the force of the tide. Often, they are only accessible on the bigger tides. These can be snaggy, but they are good for cod in winter and bass throughout most of the year. ►



**A breakwater
ballan wrasse**



TACKLING CONCRETE AND STONE JETTIES

These are not designed for protection from the sea, but are usually positioned in semi-sheltered areas to give loading access to working boats, often in small bays adjacent to rocky cliffs or outcrops or inside estuaries.

They can be constructed by positioning rocks for the foundations, with concrete poured over the top. Others are simply concrete, poured in a huge slab over natural ground rock.

This creates a different configuration to breakwaters, as the sea swell is less aggressive, although still powerful enough to keep the ground close to the pier or jetty wall free of accumulating sand. What you will find, though, is that such areas see healthy weed growth just out from the concrete wall and this is great ground for congers, codling, wrasse, as well as a host of small wrasse and mini species.

Float-fishing a piece of ragworm or a section of peeler crab can be deadly for the wrasse amid the weed, but fished as a bottom bait on smaller hooks it can account for more than a dozen species taken in a day.

Something I've learnt to my advantage is that as boats manoeuvre to come alongside, their propellers create a downwash that stirs any sediment or silt, but also attracts fish to



Try down the side of a jetty

feed on displaced food items. When fishing boats clean down their decks, bits of dead fish and bait gets washed over the side to provide a food source. Fish also like the shadow of a boat's hull in brighter weather and for protection from predators, so try flicking baits right under any moored boats.

If you cast around with a lighter lead weight and feel the ground outwards away from the

concrete, you'll normally find that the feature goes from solid rough to mixed rough, then on to patches or areas of clean sand.

In shallower water, say up to 15 feet, you'll pick up plaice, flounders and dabs on these. In deeper water over 20 feet, there's a chance of rays, typically thornbacks (see page 78), but in the west possibly spotted and the occasional blonde. These are also top spots



Comfortable fishing
on a concrete jetty

for dragonets when you fish small fish baits on size 14 hooks. A sandeel always works well on this sandy ground.

Sometimes the kelp or weed extends much further out into deeper water, and this is where you need to float-fish a whole sandeel. Let the float come around with the tide, or occasionally twitch it back a few inches. This will attract pollack, coalfish, and the occasional big ballan wrasse. A whole prawn also works well under a float.

Fishing from jetties can be more sensitive to tide timing than the generally deeper breakwater venues. If the water shallows at low water to around 10 feet, then anticipate the last two hours of the ebb tide to be slow. Expect a flush of fish to appear when the depth starts to increase after the first hour of the flood. These are the fish that have moved out as the water shallows, but instantly reappear as it gets deeper. Usually, most of the flood tide and about half the outgoing ebb will fish fairly well, though the most consistent fishing is on the flood. ►



Conger eels are a
popular target

CHECK OUT THESE GREAT VENUES



WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE PIER, ESSEX: Officially the third-longest pier in the country at half a mile long, it is accessed through the amusement arcade and opens out into a wide open space. Expect bass, pouting, garfish and soles in summer, with whiting, cod and flounders in winter. Stingrays have been caught here too.

Season tickets cost £70 for day only or £105 for 24 hours (gold card). Day fishing times are 8am-9pm, April 1 to October 31 and 9am-9pm, November 1 to March 31. Tel: 01255 672288.

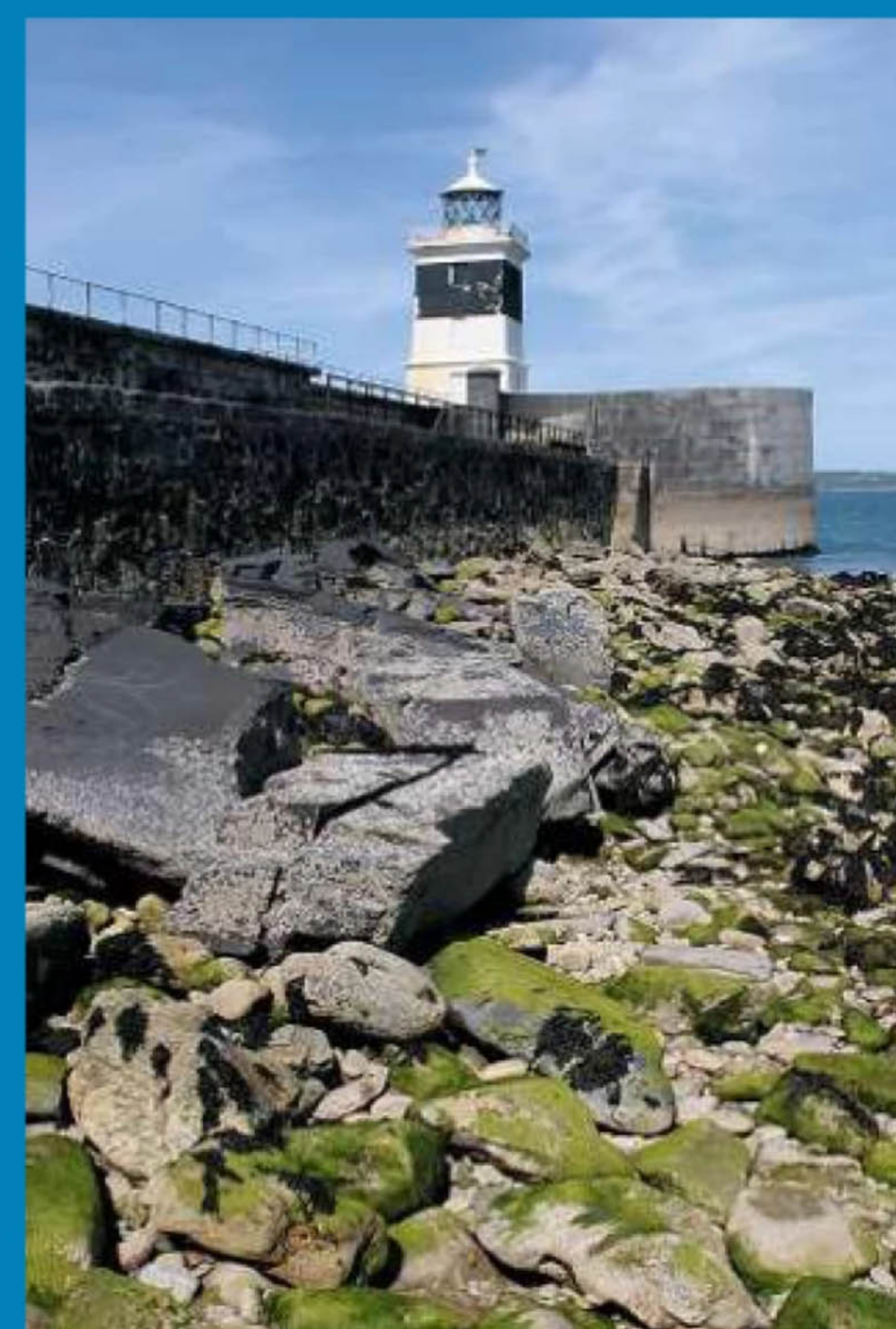
FOLKESTONE HARBOUR ARM, KENT: Mixed sand and mud close in make this a superb venue for winter dabs. Other species include codling, plaice, soles, dogfish, smoothhounds, pollack, bass, mullet, wrasse, conger eels, pouting, whiting, mackerel, scad and garfish. The low-numbered pegs are popular towards

the end of low water, with the high numbers favoured at high water. The first bend is a hotspot for flatfish.

Use the entrance opposite the Burstin Hotel. Purchase tickets before entering the pier. Day tickets cost £5 (concessions £3) and are available to full members of Dover SAA (£15 annual subscription, from Folkestone Angling, 01303 253881 or association HQ), and allow fishing from 7am-5.45pm.

HOLYHEAD BREAKWATER, ANGLESEY: At 1.7 miles long, this is the longest breakwater in the UK. Best fished on small-to-medium tides. The inside is easiest to fish, while the back wall is tackle-hungry. There is no parking on the breakwater, and there are fears Stena may want to curtail fishing here.

Species include dogfish, dabs, pollack, pouting, whiting, coalfish, codling, conger eels, gurnards, plaice, rays, bull huss and smoothhounds.





GET THE BEST FROM PIERS

Piers are completely different to both breakwaters and jetties, although some are made of stone and these should be fished in a similar manner to breakwaters. A percentage though, rely on metal or wooden leg supports, and are man-made extensions reaching out to sea with an open area between the legs. Their design, seen all over the world, lets the sea pass roughly parallel with the adjoining coast and under the pier without undue restriction.

A typical feature of these open-to-water piers is that as the tide flows through the gaps between the support legs, it scours out

a deeper channel that exposes rocks, mussel beds and patches of shingle. Either side of this gutter it is clean sand, or mixed sand and shingle. This is where a lot of anglers miss out by not being aware of this often-unseen, deeper gutter.

Any food barrelling along with the tide gets washed across the sand then falls into the deeper gutter, concentrating a larger amount of food that holds in this deeper water.

If you always fish the side where the tidal flow is hitting, then your bait, if dropped close in with a lead weight just light enough to move it when lifted, can be trotted down

into the gutter where the bulk of the feeding fish will be.

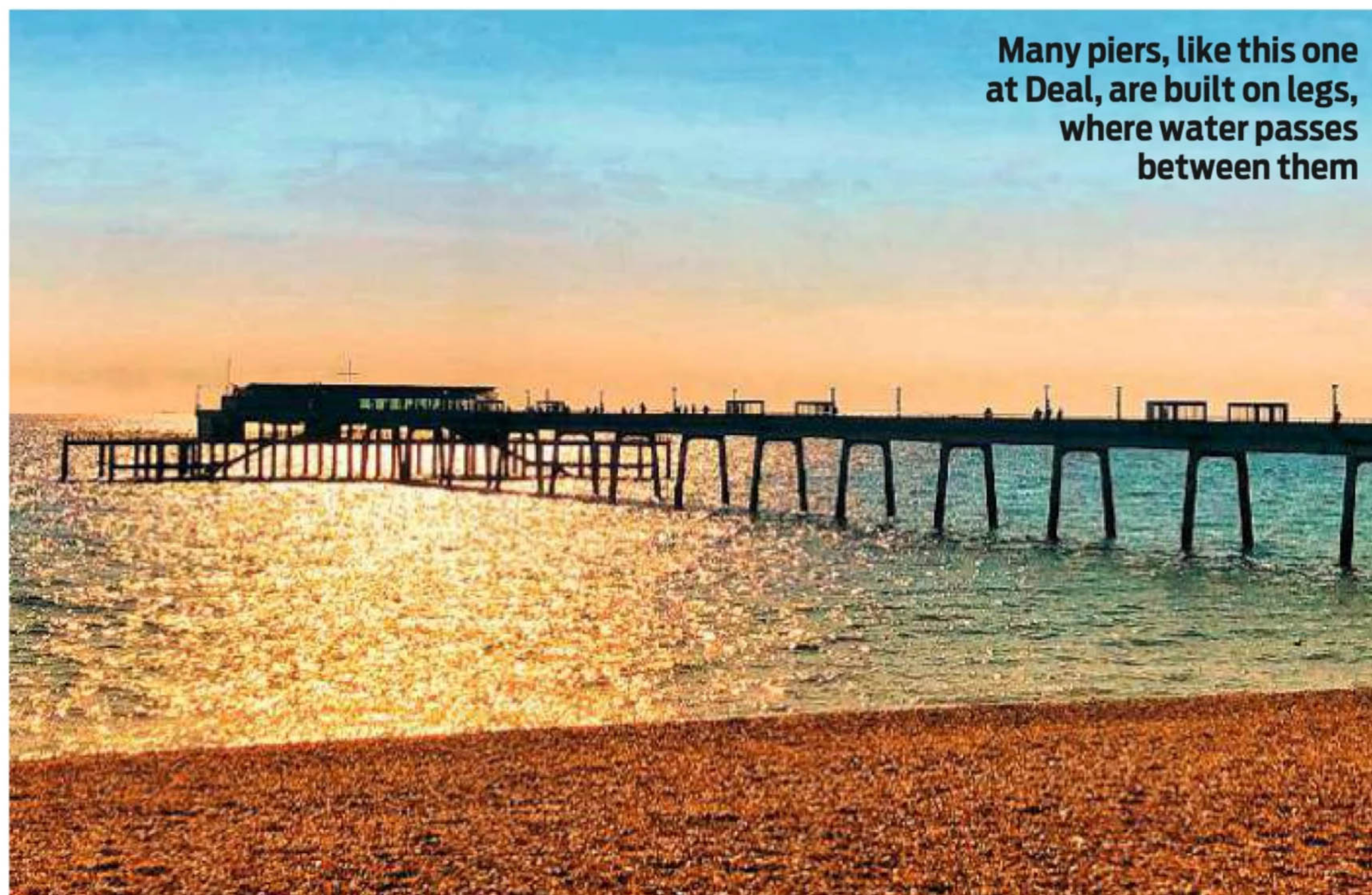
Typical species are coalfish, flounders, dabs, whiting, codling, bass, and even plaice. The best rig is a long 3ft flowing trace armed with either two smaller size 2 Aberdeen hooks for the general species with worm or fish baits, or a single 3/0 to 4/0 hook for the bass and codling with lugworm, mussel or crab the best overall baits.

Remember to note exactly where the main leg supports go into the sand. The passing tide will scour out deep holes around them and these will see cod, bass, flatfish and coalies work through as food gets deposited here.

These under-pier gutters fish well if there is constant water in them. Do not be put off by gutters that almost dry up as the tide reaches low water. I used to fish just such a place and found that, even though there was dry sand either side of the gutter, both bass and flounders followed the early tide that pushed along the gutter. I often caught early bass in just a few inches of water.

Another good feature to seek out is immediately downtide of the pier where there may be a built-up sandbank. If so, this can sometimes drop away at a steep angle on the seaward side. Letting baits trot over and down this bank edge can be deadly for bass and flatfish in summer, and in winter for codling, whiting and flatties. Fish this from the downtide side of the pier using a lead weight just light enough to bounce downtide.

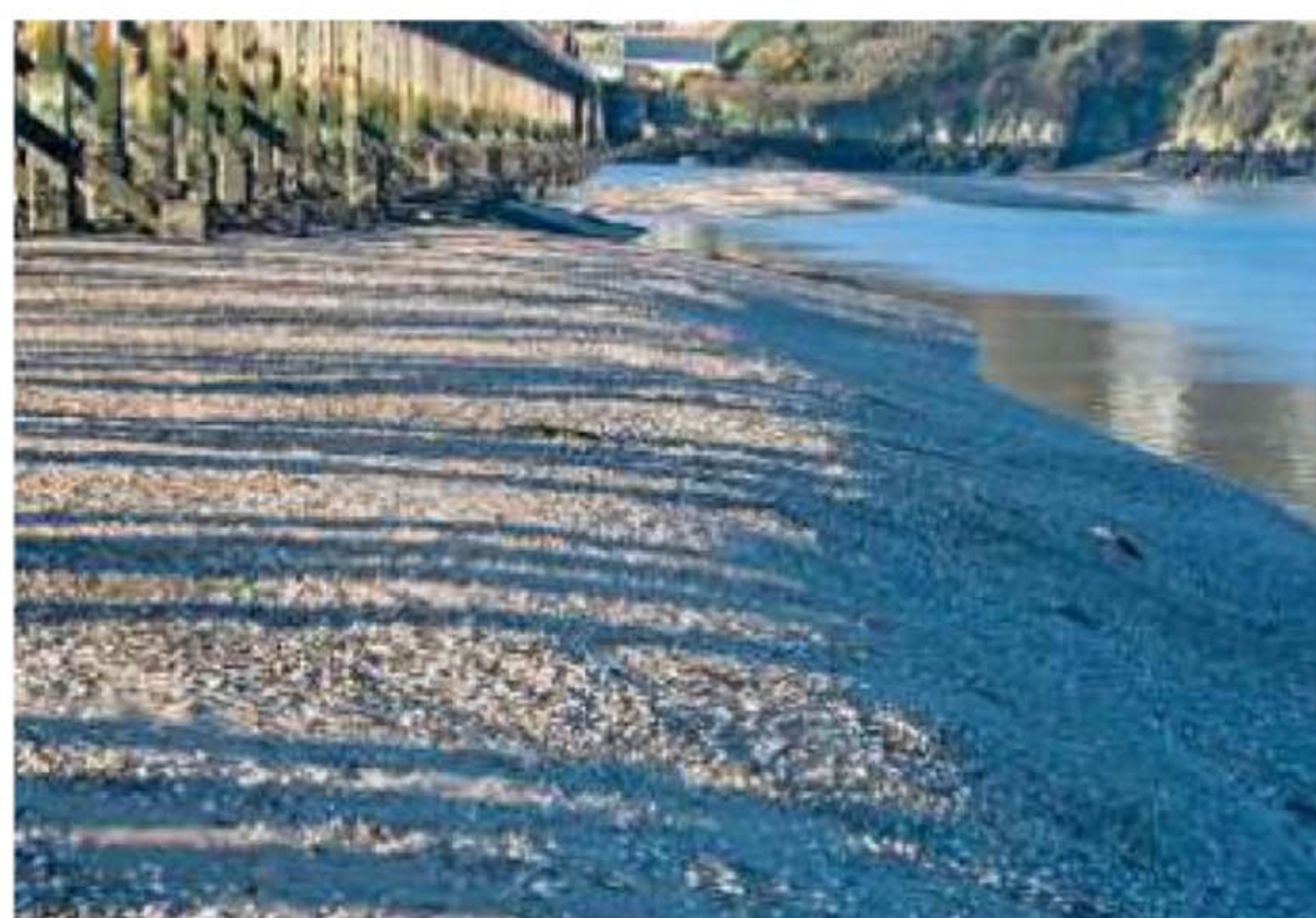
Too many anglers fish the easy way, casting too far from the side the tide flow is leaving. This often puts your baits on to



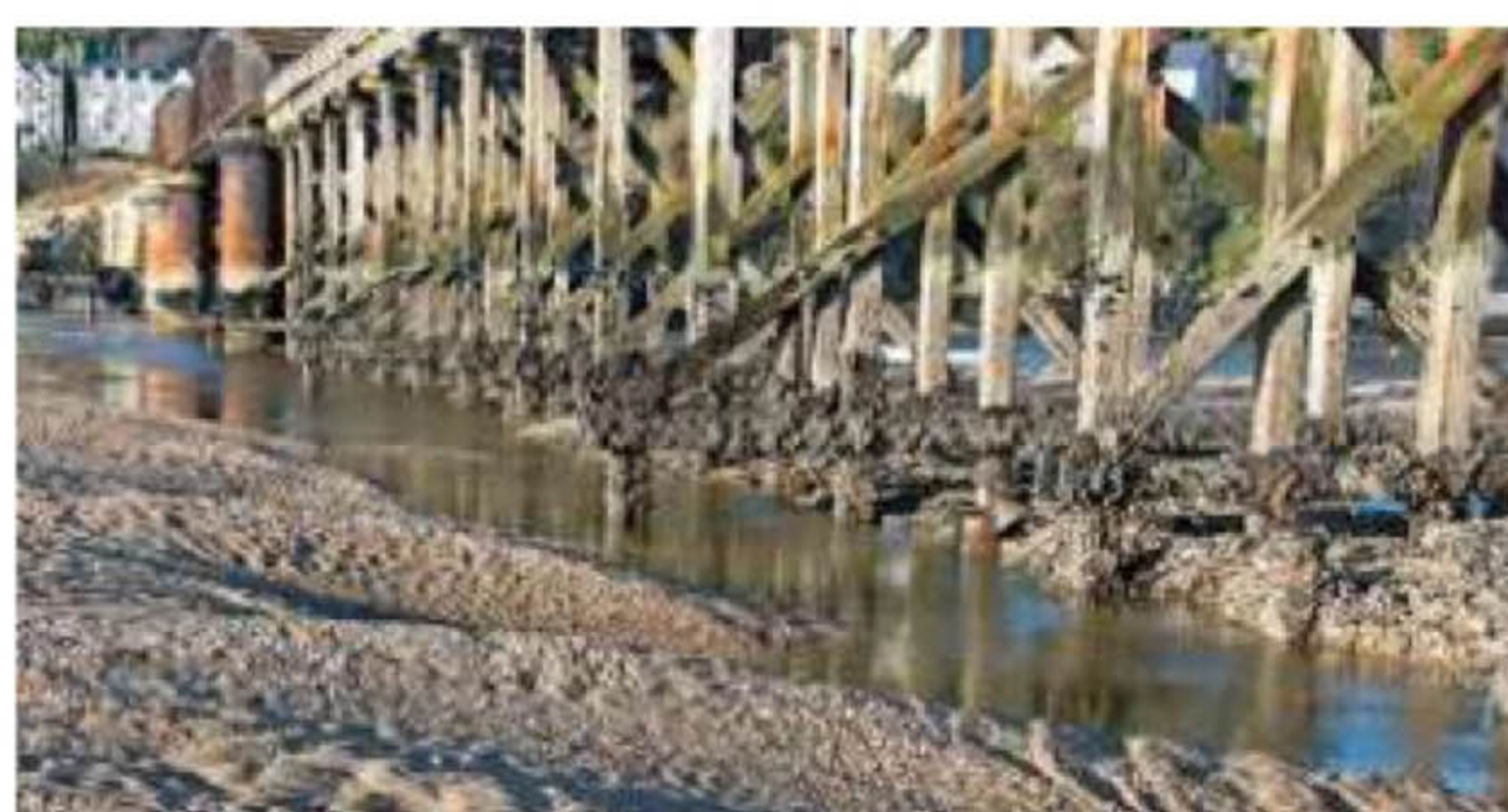
Many piers, like this one at Deal, are built on legs, where water passes between them



Gutters and pools form under many piers



Fish the steep banks downtide of a pier



Look for the deeper gutters under wooden piers where early fish follow the flood tide



Expect to catch many species of wrasse

clean featureless sand with very few fish evident. Unless you know there are good ground features at range, such as undulating sandbanks in deeper water or, better still, rough ground, I wouldn't waste time or bait fishing at range over flat featureless sand.

Being able to visualise what lies underwater when fishing breakwaters, piers and jetties, as well as having an understanding of what species are likely to be where and which ground features they favour, is 80 per cent of being successful when fishing man-made structures. Baits, rigs and tackle only account for the last 20 per cent. Position yourself right and target the species in front of you and the results can be magic. ■

CHECK OUT THESE GREAT VENUES



SEAHAM NORTH PIER, COUNTY DURHAM: Located six miles south of Sunderland, access to this very popular venue is restricted to Seaham SAC members (0191 581 0321). Cost is £30 for annual membership, with concessions for juniors and OAPs. All members get a key to the venue.

The pier, where the ground ranges from clean to rough, is noted for its autumn and winter cod fishing. Summer species include plaice, dogfish, bass, pouting, soles, pollack, mackerel and thornback, spotted and cuckoo rays. Night tides can produce cod to peeler crabs in summer.

There is a car park at the base of the pier, but it can be busy at weekends.

BRIXHAM BREAKWATER, SOUTH DEVON: Protecting Brixham Harbour, this breakwater is popular with anglers and considered one of the most important marks in Torbay, mainly because of its potential

to produce record fish. Fishing is possible from both sides of the venue. There are rocks on either side of the structure. Once a top mark for conger eels, it also produces bass, pollack, dogfish, rockling, whiting, wrasse, garfish and mackerel.

The lighthouse end is popular in summer.

There is ample parking nearby (the cost is cheaper at night). It's a 10-minute walk to the end of the venue.

ST CATHERINE'S BREAKWATER, JERSEY:

The most popular mark on Jersey, this is another venue with record fish potential. Fishing is from the front and back walls.

The end is popular with mackerel anglers. Other species include various ray species, pollack, garfish, wrasse, rockling, black bream, conger eels, mullet, soles, plaice and smoothhounds.

Due to the strong tide, most of the fishing is during slack water either side of high or low tide.





Should have been here yesterday!

Don't despair if your cod fishing has been inconsistent because it's been the same for many top-class anglers...



Chris 'Bugsy' Read
with a codling

ORIGINALLY BUILT IN 1966, Aberthaw power station is an imposing backdrop to this very productive shore venue. Currently dormant, it was last fired up in March 2018 when the country was hit by the 'Beast from the East', but when it is generating electricity, the returning cooling water is a huge attraction for several species of fish.

Changes to the sea temperature of only a degree or two can have a huge effect on the marine environment, and this was certainly the case at Aberthaw.

School bass and mullet used to swarm around the cooling water outlets, along a wide variety of species, especially smoothhounds that are regularly caught here in huge numbers from May until August, which, not surprisingly, is when most anglers target the venue.

In the glory days of Bristol Channel cod fishing throughout the 1990s and first years of the new millennium, the cod fishing at Aberthaw was very good, occasionally exceptional. Traditionally, Aberthaw would start to produce fish in December, with January until March being the most productive months. Then, large numbers of codling used to be caught, along with a fair sprinkling of double-figure fish and even an occasional 20-pounder.

In terms of producing cod in recent years, Aberthaw has been unremarkable, but increasingly, as 2019 slipped into 2020, I heard of respectable numbers of cod being caught here. ▶

ROUGH AND READY

As productive as Aberthaw may be, there is a downside to shore fishing here. At best, it is a very rough-ground venue. Factor in a strong to exceptionally powerful lateral run of tide and it is hardly surprising that tackle losses here can be extremely heavy.

Clearly a rig incorporating some form of rotten-bottom attachment for the lead weight is essential. You should be ready to lose your sinker on almost every cast, along with some terminal rigs each session.

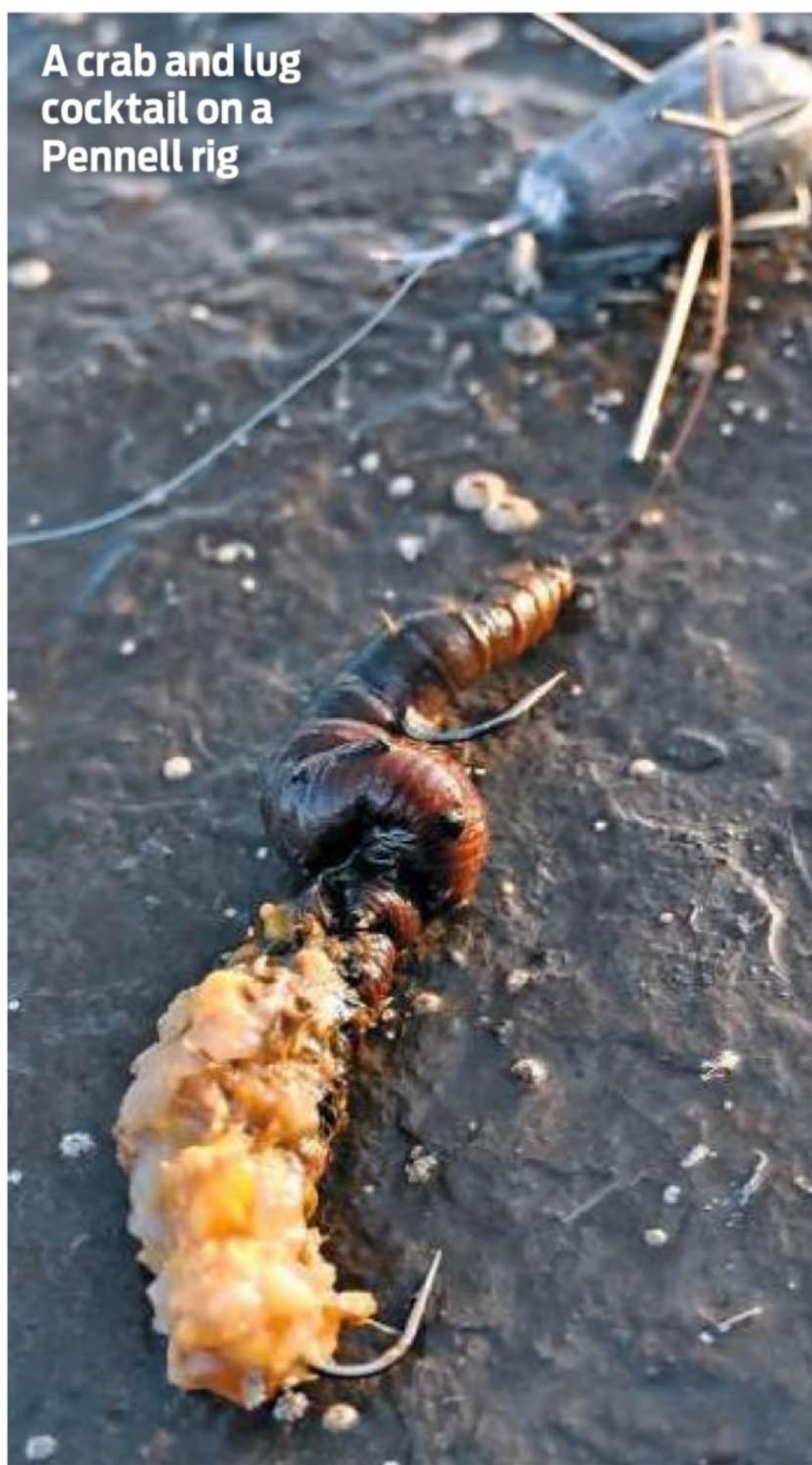
The optimum time to fish at Aberthaw is for about two-and-a-half to three hours either side of low water on small neap to mid-range tides. Avoid the larger tides because the push of water is too strong to hold bottom.

Most anglers start by fishing the ebb from the rock ledges to the west of the old cooling water outlets; they're the twin concrete structures you cannot miss. As soon as the tide starts to flood, which it does with immense force, they then move to the pebble beach east of these outlets, which is known as East Aberthaw, where they encounter more favourable conditions.

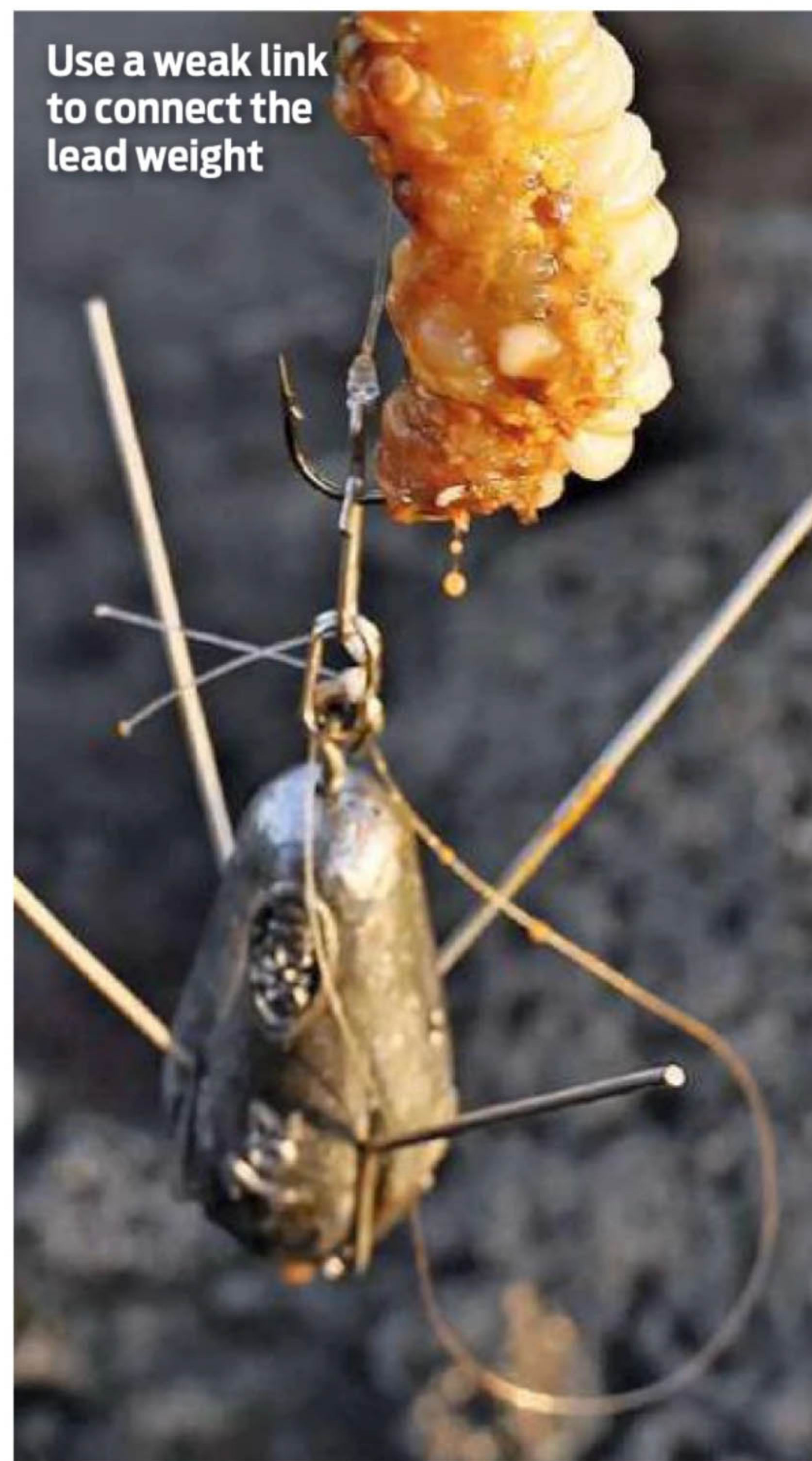
Roy Tapper, from Cardiff, is one of the most successful shore match and specimen anglers in South Wales, and his rig of preference for cod and other species at Aberthaw is a fixed paternoster, rather than the pulley rig favoured by many other experienced anglers.

"I find a fixed paternoster puts me in more direct contact with the fish, resulting in more solid hook-ups than a pulley rig," explained Roy, when we met up for a late afternoon session in January. Accompanying Roy was a small group of top anglers, including former world champion Joe Arch and Penn Sea League final double winner Chris 'Bugsy' Read.

A crab and lug cocktail on a Pennell rig



Use a weak link to connect the lead weight



SLUG-FEST

Distance casting is not always necessary at Aberthaw, but like so many other consistently successful anglers Roy is an impressive caster and attributes the extra yards he can achieve as being a major contributing factor to his frequent success here and at other similar venues. Sure enough, within minutes of making his first cast, the tip of Roy's rods indicated a bite.

"Looks like a small fish," Roy nonchalantly noted as he continued to bait a spare rig with a juicy lump of peeler crab. Of course, he was right. A few minutes later, he swung a colourful three-bearded rockling to hand. Seconds later Steve Smyth, who was fishing alongside Roy, landed the fish's twin.

Looking at the bend in the tip of Roy's rod, it was immediately apparent that the next fish he hooked shortly afterwards was rather



Baits were seized by strap congers, like this one for Steve Smyth



A colourful three-bearded rockling for Roy Tapper



Roy bagged four strap congers in four casts



more substantial than another small 'slug'. Indeed, it was, a strap conger of around 4lb, but unfortunately not the plump codling we sought. That eel was the first of four he landed on his next four casts. With Steve landing a similar number of congers, it was clear this area, a few hundred yards to the west of the original cooling water outlets, was something of a conger hotspot. Any foraging cod would have to be very quick off the mark to beat either an eel or a rockling to the bait.

Joe and Buggy had both decided to start fishing adjacent to the old water outlets, which at first produced a few more rockling and pouting. The latter were an extremely common species throughout the Bristol Channel, but for many years they all but disappeared. It's good to see that in recent years this species appears to be doing very well in the area.

AT LAST!

It was Buggy who landed the first codling of the session, a lovely fin-perfect specimen in the absolute peak of condition. It would have made a fine fish for the table, had Chris not decided to release it. How times have changed! It's not that many years ago that any codling caught of suitable size would have been destined for a pan of sizzling fat. One more codling, a fish that was the twin of the first, was landed by Chris.

As cod sessions go, we didn't experience an especially productive session, but the beauty of venues such as Aberthaw is that even if your target species are not active, there will almost always be other species that will keep you on your toes.

During the session we were joined by a couple of lads who had fished at Aberthaw only a few days before, when they had each



This codling fell for a crab bait



Pouting are making a welcome return

taken cod to 6lb, as had other anglers fishing that day. This typifies the cod fishing scene. When fishing from the shore it has rarely been consistent, with fish being present in an area on one day, but not the next.

You can never be certain which tides will or won't produce fish. All you can do is make the effort to identify the best tides and weather conditions and get out fishing. Of course, use the best quality bait too. In other words, you have to be in it to win it! ■

NEED TO KNOW

GETTING THERE

■ At junction 33 of the M4, follow the signs for Cardiff Airport. Drive past the airport heading west on the A4226 and then the A4265 towards Llantwit Major. Heading west, you will see the power station with Aberthaw signposted just past a petrol station. Park in the car park at the end of the lane.



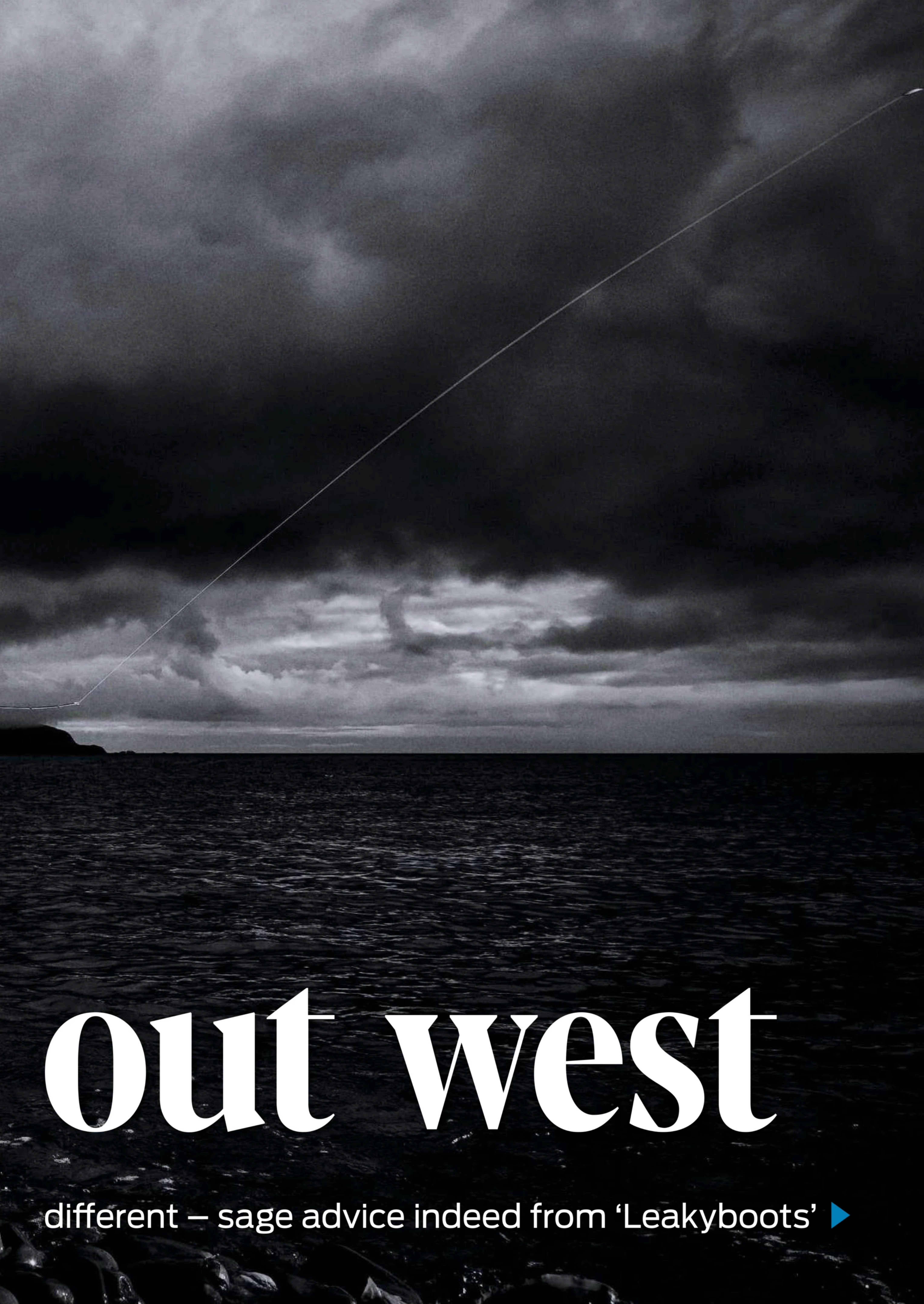


Main image by HENRY GILBEY



Two days

When your approach is not working, do something



out west

different – sage advice indeed from ‘Leakyboots’ ►

IN WEST CORNWALL WE SAY “If you don’t like the weather, wait twenty minutes.” I’m sure you hear the same thing in other parts of the country, but down here it’s true. We live on a long finger that pokes out into the Atlantic, there’s no telling what’s going to come in from the ocean, especially in spring.

One day we can be basking in the sunshine of a high pressure system, the next can bring horizontal rain as holidaymakers shudder in galeforce winds, nursing their pasties like hot water bottles and wondering why they didn’t go to Marbella, Miami, or Manchester, somewhere less miserably sodden.

Sometimes I see a message on an angling forum: “I’ve got a week down your way over the Easter break, should I bring my lure rod or my beach outfit?” To which I’m tempted to reply, “Both, along with fly-tackle, a beach shelter, an LRF outfit, a charcoal brazier, a skimpy swimsuit, thermal undies, flip-flops, neoprene waders, sun-screen, and a few acres of fleece and Goretex outerwear. In fact, you might want to fill your car with all the kit you own, and put your children on the train.”

But here’s the good news: whether you’re sweltering in an early heatwave or shivering in a blizzard, what matters to the bass is the water temperature. As soon as it’s above eight or nine degrees, I’m in with a chance of decent fishing, whatever gear I use.

GUESSING GAME

When I was a youngster, the veterans told me to look at the sea pinks (*Armeria maritima*). Once they were flowering, the ocean would be warming up and the bass would be on the feed. I prefer to study the sea spinach or sea beet plants (*Beta vulgaris maritima*) and kick off my season when the new leaves are three or four inches long. This also means there’s no such thing as a blank. If I can’t find any fishable water, I’ll change my target species and come home with a bag of green vegetables and we won’t go hungry.

It’s that quality of adaptability that strikes me as key to catching early-season bass. Some anglers say they’re fussy eaters, but I try not to attribute human qualities to creatures with pea-sized brains. Restaurant critics can be fussy, along with people who believe the drivel touted by so-called nutritionists in tabloid newspapers.

But bass don’t wander the deeps in search of a perfectly balanced wild mushroom risotto or a superfood goji berry and kale smoothie. They eat whatever they can find in sufficient quantity to keep them growing. It’s just that in springtime it isn’t always obvious what that is, or where they might be finding it.

Later in the year, when the whitebait and mackerel arrive, for instance, the angler’s life is simpler – a lure or fly to suggest a whitebait among the rocks and reefs, or a head-and-guts in the surf. In March and April, though, it’s more of a guessing game because the bass could be browsing on weed maggots, mullet, worms, shellfish, or just about anything; and they could be doing it just about anywhere.

A lot of anglers decide the when, where,



“Some people stick to their up-front strategy decisions with grim and inflexible determination”

and how of their outings well in advance. For instance: “We’ll start at dusk tomorrow on the long strand, I’ll bring lugworms, you bring rum and sandwiches”. Being organised is no bad thing; I’ve been known to arrive on the shore only to find my waders were still hanging up in the garage, or the squid was languishing in the deep freeze. At times like these I remember my regimental sergeant major who had us bellow in unison, “Proper Planning and Preparation Prevents Piss Poor Performance”.

Yet some people stick to their up-front strategy decisions with grim and inflexible determination, abandoning them only when their arms are tired from catching bass, or when it’s become obvious they’d have as many bites if they were nursing a jar of ale in the nearest waterside hostelry. Not so good, better to adapt to what’s going on.

HUNGRY TEENAGERS

One late March we had a week of light, cool breezes, not enough to build a surf on the beaches, but the rocky headlands were fizzy with modest waves. “Time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted” was another of the sergeant major’s mantras, so I took an evening stroll around a few favourite coves. In one, the high-water line was thick with rotting weed from the winter storms, and I reckoned I could sense a food chain.

Weed brings in maggots that attract finger mullet, bass eat mullet, and once in a while I turn myself into an apex predator and scoff a plump bass with chips and a green vegetable.

Next morning, an hour before dawn and high tide, I was flicking a black and silver shallow diver along the shoreline. Mullet-shaped, mullet-coloured, but nothing doing beyond a small pollack. Okay, I thought, maybe a different link in the food chain, I’d try livebaiting. But that was no good, either, and in a quarter-of-an-hour the pollack had given up the ghost.

Time for Plan C. I had a bash with a small grub-shaped fly, something to suggest a maggot, on a dropper ahead of a soft plastic. Maybe the bass were bypassing the mullet and going straight for the little morsels. Still no joy, so I propped my bottom against a boulder and rolled a ciggy as an aid to contemplation. What next?

In front of my improvised seat was a shallow gully in the pebbles. I switched on my torch and peered into it. Dozens and dozens of inch-long silvery shapes were flitting around. Generally, I expect jelly-fry from late April. But my calendar comes courtesy of my £12.99 digital watch, while tiddler behaviour’s governed by temperature, tide, wind direction, the Gulf Stream, and – for all I know – the horoscope page in the Daily Mail.

Anyway, the fry were about, and bass suck



Sea beet or sea spinach in April. Sauté in oil with optional garlic for a free treat!

them down like hungry teenagers plundering a refrigerator. They're so fatty that they must provide a lot of calories per mouthful, like those energy bars they give to long distance runners. Off with the maggotty fly, on with a size 4 tinselly effort, and I released four schoolies before a chubby three-pounder went into my bag. On the walk back to the car I gathered some sea spinach as well – a double header session.

BEST FRIEND

That afternoon it clouded over and the wind picked up out of the west. By bedtime, it was a damp Force 5, so I grabbed a packet of squid from the deep freeze and left it to thaw overnight. Squid, I find, is a versatile bait. That's a pompous way of saying I use it when I can't think of anything better to try.

At four o'clock next morning I attached a wired lead – the sea was heaving too much for a bomb weight – and chucked nine inches of prime calamari into the frothy surf. It felt like a morning for a good fish – warm, wet, and wild. But an hour and two baits later, all I had for my pains was a dripping beard and a greedy rockling.

"When it's not working, do something different." That nugget's not from the sergeant major, it's my own. I upped sticks and wandered along the beach a few hundred yards to a spot where the wave looked particularly bassy – lots of foam and froth.

As I set down my backpack, I noticed a crunchy sound under my boots, the sand was carpeted with mussel shells. What's more they were new arrivals, most still contained bits of orange flesh. I wondered about having a go with squid anyway, but I remembered an old gillie I knew when I was a lad: "Fish like you mean it, or don't fish at all."

That meant a rain-battered half-mile slog through soft sand back to the car. As best I can tell, the Highway Code doesn't prohibit driving in trouser waders or a jacket that smells of old bait, so I just cleaned the spray from my glasses and whizzed home. I grabbed a couple of fistfuls of frozen mussels and drove back to the shore, where I released three bass in under an hour, the best nearly 6lb. Adaptability is the angler's best friend.

OPTIONS OPEN

A little before dawn a holidaymaker showed up. His name was Alan and he'd been at it all night for a tiny whiting and an emaciated flounder. He was on lugworms, so I turned out my pocket for the last of my mussels: three big ones and a mushed-up nipper. Alan was a dab hand with elastic thread; he bodged them together into a tasty-looking bundle, and cast into the bubbling mayhem while I sat down to watch.

I barely had time to roll a smoke before I saw his body tense as he tightened into what turned out to be a 4lb bass. Once it was beached, he relaxed into a grin that almost split his face in two. "So, are shellfish the best bait in these parts?" he asked. I'm a retired

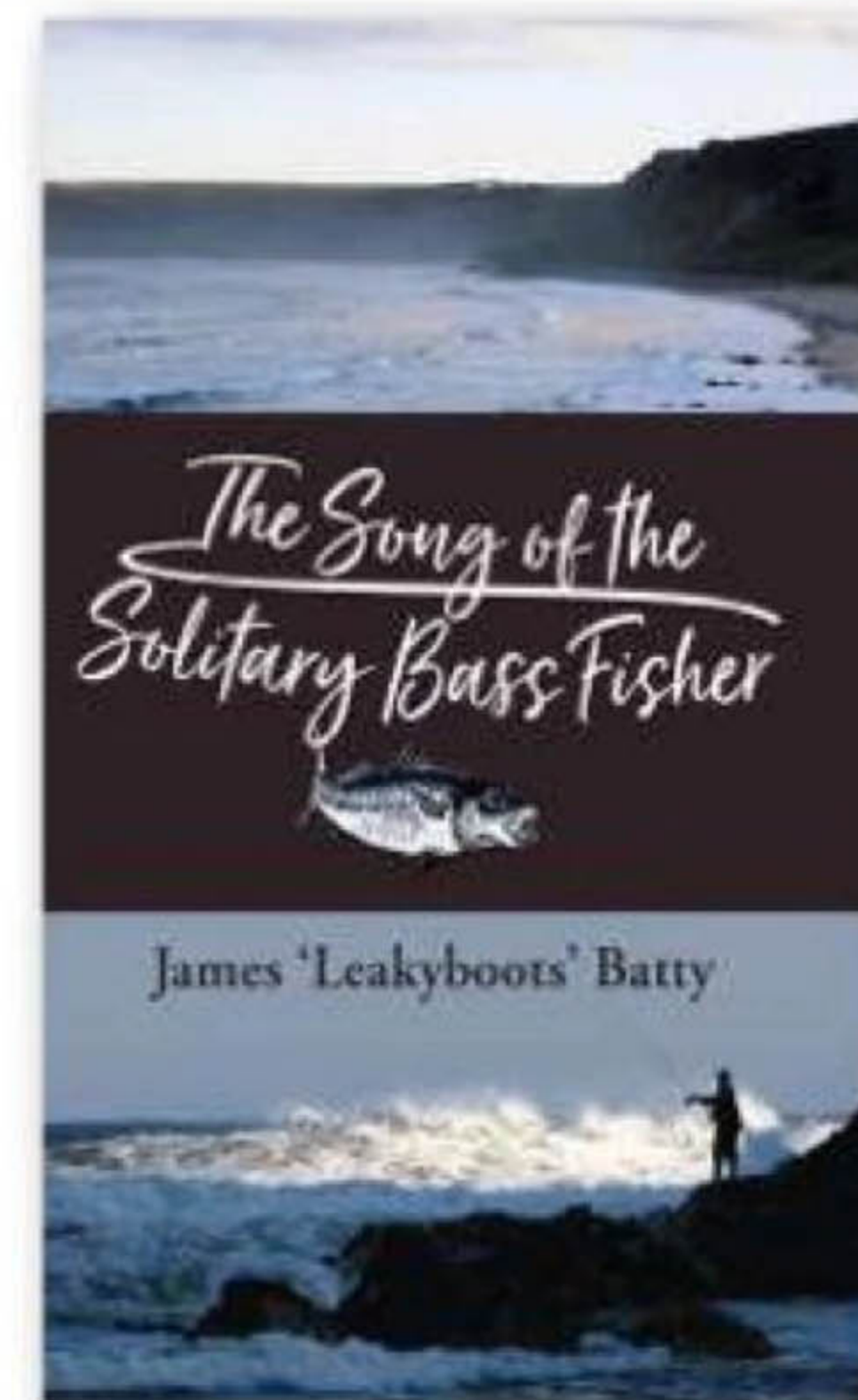
management consultant, I gave him the answer for which my profession is so justly infamous: "It depends." But that's exactly what it does, it depends what edible bits and pieces are in the water right here and right now, and in the spring that could be almost anything. You need to keep your options open.

Lure-fishers and fly-casters travel with plenty of options, boxes rammed with poppers, sliders, streamers, grubs, fake prawns, deep and shallow divers, soft plastics, shads, spoons, and metal jigs. If you use artificials, it's a case of making sure you ring the changes until you get it right. But when you're on bait, it's very hard to cover all the possibilities.

Generally, I carry what I'm planning to use, with something frozen as back-up, but that limits me to just two choices. What I need is a fridge and a freezer in my car so I can drive around with a full à la carte menu of worms, sandeels, mackerel, squid, crabs, razor clams, and mussels. The issue would be powering it without running down the battery. Maybe a solar panel on the roof? Maybe a little

windmill? But back to where I started, in these parts you never can tell what the weather's going to bring.

■ **James Batty** is the author of 'The Song of the Solitary Bass Fisher', published by Merlin Unwin Books, price £14.99.




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Hooray! It's the New Year and time to celebrate...by going fishing

WITH BELLS RINGING IN the New Year, I avoided the party animals and instead got my first fishing trip of 2020 underway. Yes, as fireworks lit up the skies and others celebrated, I was itching to get out and wet a line after what seemed

a very long Christmas break.

Within half-an-hour of midnight, I set off to Exeter to join Gav Cuthbertson for a journey to South Wales, where, at about 2.30am, we met our Sea Angling Adventures' colleagues Gethyn Durham and Matt Herring.

Thankfully, this being very early morning and New Year's Day, the roads were empty. ►

“The plan was to travel light because there would be a bit of a hike to get to the actual fishing mark. Several hours later... we started to head up a mountain”



From the rendezvous point, we would then head to the west coast of the Principality, where we'd fish for bull huss and pollack. The plan was to travel light because there would be a bit of a hike to get to the actual fishing mark.

Several hours later we reached a car park where we stretched our legs, unloaded our gear and started to head up a mountain. Honestly, the walk seemed to go on forever. After an hour or so of walking up and then down we reached our destination.

DEEP WATER

Strong tackle and rotten-bottom rigs were required because the ground could be quite snaggy. A few extra lead weights were needed too, as we would lose a few to the broken ground.

My choice was a pair of Century T900 rods matched with Daiwa Saltiga reels loaded with 25lb mainline, while Gav had gone a step up with a pair of T1000 rods and Saltiga reels loaded with 25lb breaking strain Asso Bulletproofline and 100lb shockleaders to cope with the conditions.

It was around low water and the sea was flat, which was helpful because we were very close to the water level. Gethyn confirmed that the venue could only be fished in flat seas because the swells get very big and can be very dangerous at times. As we set up our rods, I noticed a few anglers descending the cliff tops to our left. Obviously, others had the same idea of an early-morning New Year start. We

weren't the only ones crazy enough to walk for an hour or so in the cold just to wet a line.

When I cast out, my lead weight just kept sinking and sinking. I've fished some deep marks back home in Devon, but this seemed to be a lot deeper.

Things were slow for a few hours until the tide started to flood. We hoped the pollack would find our whole squid baits fished on pulley rigs with rotten bottoms. As I chatted to Gav and Gethyn about the area, Matt seemed to be ignoring the conversation and instead was watching his rod tip. For good

“Just as we decided to admit defeat and call it a night, Gethyn’s rod tip bent over. He jumped up, lifted the rod and began to retrieve line before hitting into the fish”

reason, because his rod tip slammed over and dropped into slack line. Matt lifted his rod and started to gain line on his reel. Fish on! After a short battle Matt landed a pollack of around 2-3lb, a great start.

As Matt released the pollack into the sea to fight another day, we hoped for more action, but the fishing was really slow for the rest of the daylight hours, with little or no sign of any fish activity in front of us.

As darkness approached, the bites started from numerous dogfish. Our long journey to Devon was turning into our worst nightmare

because these bait robbers were the last species we wanted to see. There was no option but to fish through the pesky dogfish, hoping that the bull huss or pollack would get to our baits before another dogfish. Sadly, neither of these species turned up for myself or Gav.

However, just as we decided to admit defeat and call it a night, Gethyn's rod tip bent over. He jumped up, lifted the rod and began to retrieve line before hitting into the fish. With that, the tip of his T1000 buckled over. As he lifted the fish up through the rougher ground, we all directed our headlights on the water and

were soon rewarded as the beams highlighted a huss of around 8-9lb coming towards us.

After a quick photograph, Gethyn released the fish and we watched it dive straight into the dark depths. That was the last fish of the night. Even though it was not the trip

we had aimed for, it was a great day out with fantastic company at a new location.

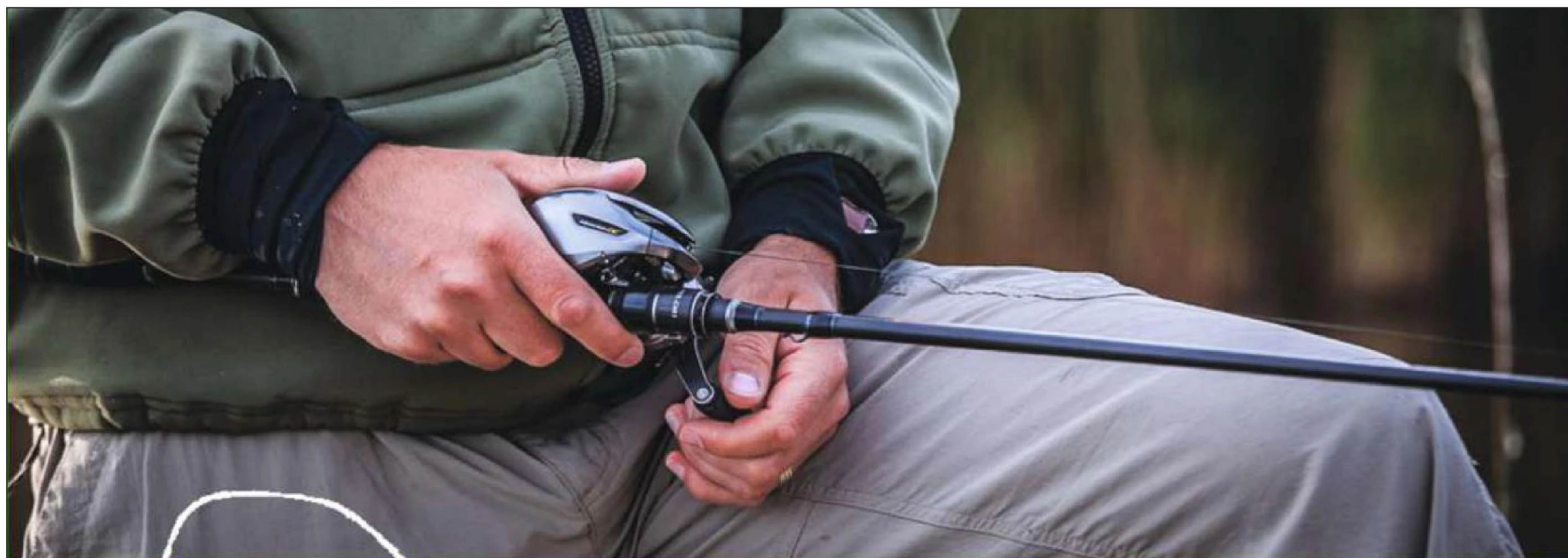
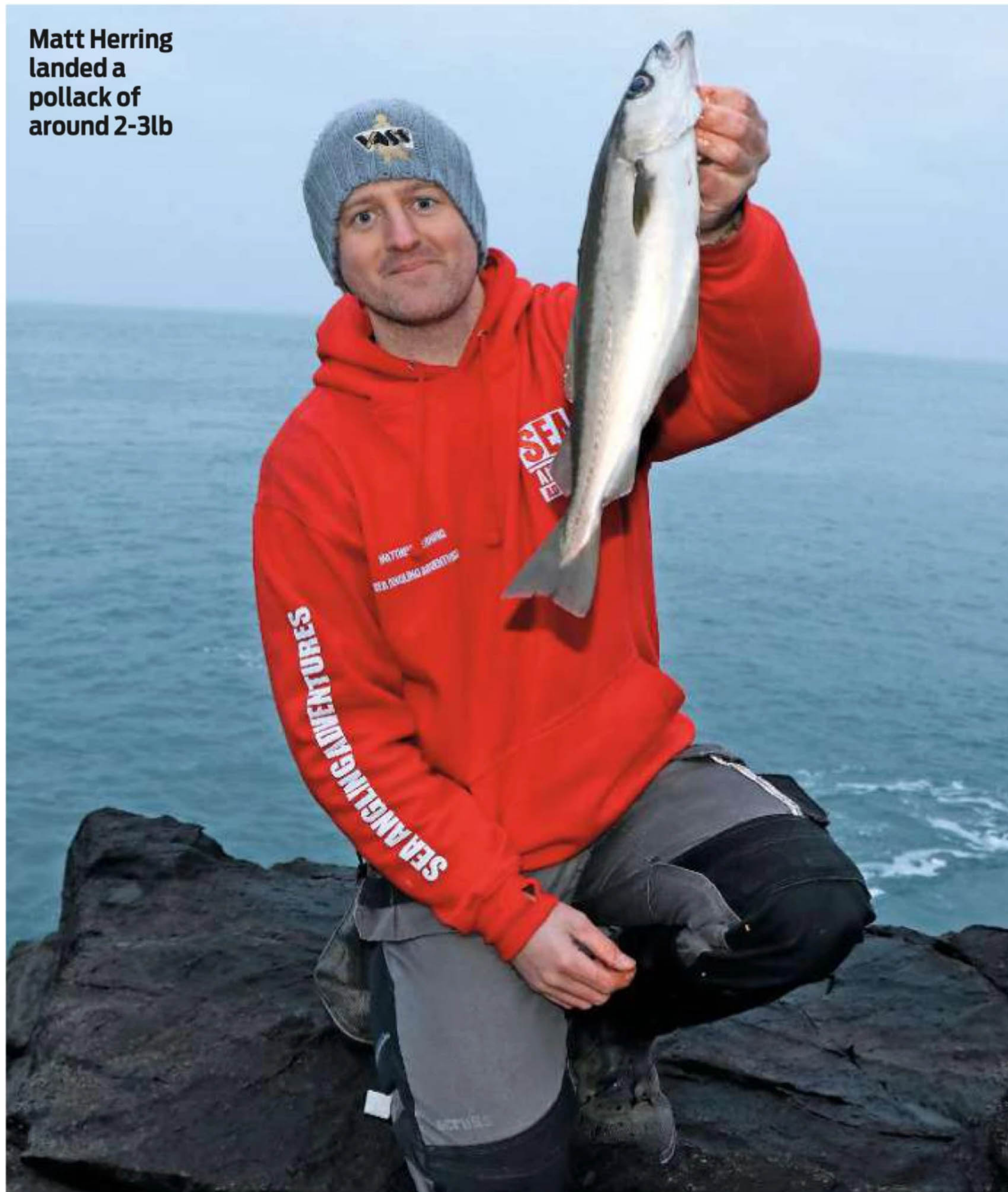
Tiredness started to kick in during our long walk back to the car. It was around midnight when we arrived at Gethyn's home in South Wales. After about 24 hours on the go, we still had a two-hour drive back to Devon ahead of us, so we decided to get our heads down in the wagon for a few hours before setting off.

Feeling a bit fitter for the drive, we were already looking forward to hitting the coastline once again for another adventure. It's being there that matters. ■

Gethyn Durham
with a huss of
around 8-9lb



Matt Herring
landed a
pollack of
around 2-3lb



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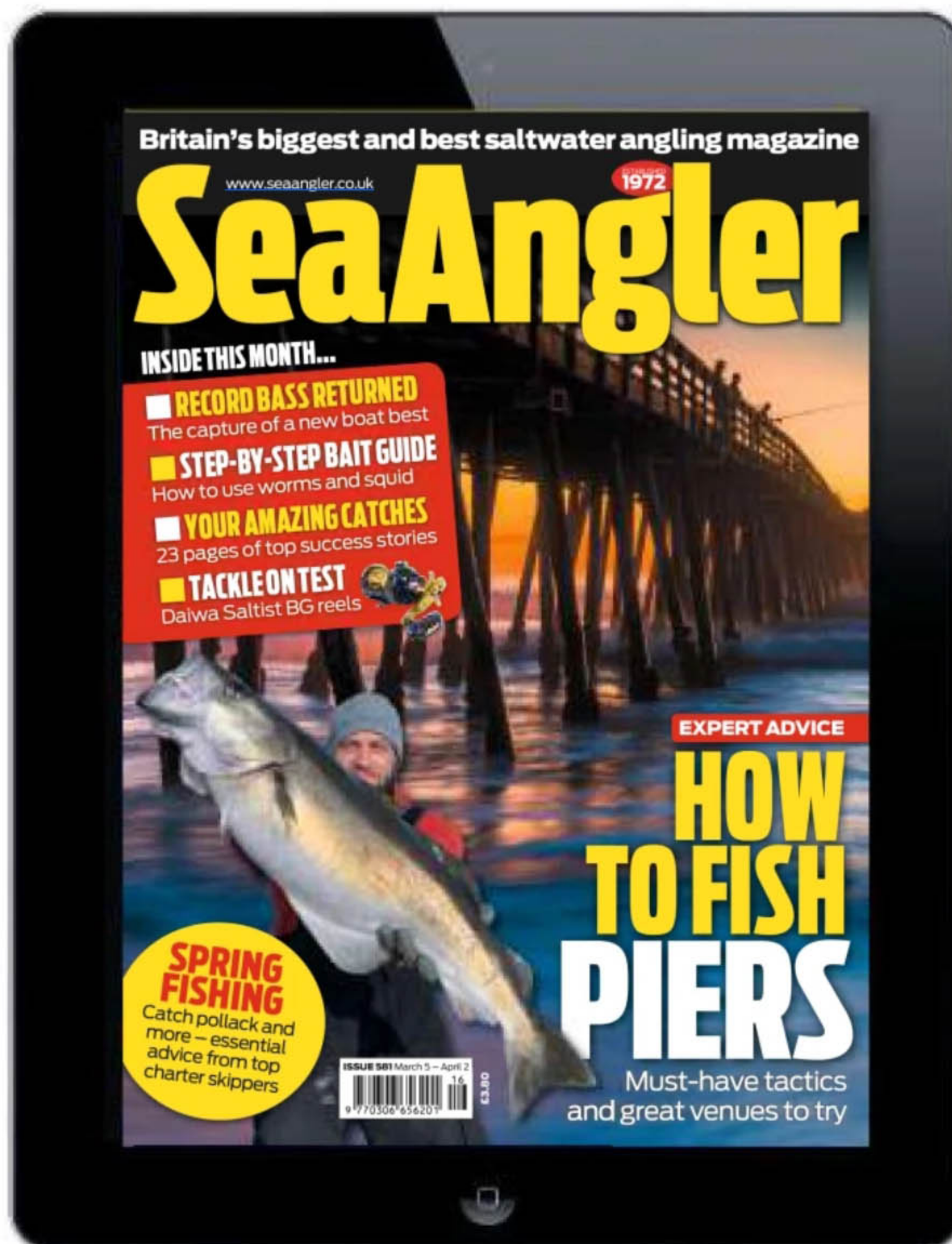
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‘Record’ bass

Charter skipper returns monster Isle of Wight fish

CHARTER SKIPPER LEE HALL HAS caught and released what would have been a British record for a boat-caught bass.

The owner and skipper of Black Rock Charters, which has two boats out of Yarmouth Harbour, Isle of Wight, had taken a customer on a last-minute cod session when he boated the 20lb bass.

The fish, which was weighed, witnessed and then released, would have beaten the record of 19lb 9oz 2dr, caught on August 29 1987 by Paul McEwan, off Reculver, Kent.

“I had a call from a regular customer, Peter Hall, who asked if there was a trip out the following day. Peter, who is retired, and has fished all his life, had never caught a cod, so I thought this could be the last chance this year to find the

elusive fish. It was too late to get any other customers, so I decided to go out just with him,” said Lee.

It was a very slow day, with only dogfish and congers to show for their efforts, but, on the ebb tide, they moved to a mark only a mile off the Needles.

Fishing with two rods each, Lee used a pair of Penn Rampage 30/50lb-class boat rods with Penn Squall LW reels. His big catch came to the rod with a reel loaded with 60lb braid and carrying an 80lb trace with a Pennell rig made with Fladen size 5/0 and 8/0 circle hooks baited with Andy’s Baits frozen medium-size cuttlefish.

“Fishing in 25 metres of water, the bait wasn’t down long and I saw a few strong tugs,” said Lee. “I picked up my rod and again felt another couple of strong bites. I thought we had cracked it – finally a cod.”

He let out some line and felt another heavy bang on the rod and a few nods that made him think it was a big cod.

“Then this massive strip of silver appeared – I couldn’t believe it,” he said. “Peter struggled to get the big fish in the net, but eventually we landed it and couldn’t believe our eyes. It was hooked perfectly and I got the hooks out with ease.

“When I put it on the scales, we knew I must be close to the record. It weighed in at 20lb exactly.”

The sea was flat, so it was easy to weigh. Due to the bass regulations, it was then released. Lee’s previous best bass was 12lb, caught from the eastern end of the Island.

Reflecting on the fact he can’t claim the record, Lee said: “It’s a shame, but I know that I have caught the biggest bass. That’s good enough for me.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

POUTING LURES A RAY

Finley Paton, from Jersey, Channel Islands, fished a small pouting bait on a running leger to catch this 14lb 11oz undulate ray from the island's north coast.



BLOW LUG PRODUCES

Fishing with blow lug on a size 4/0 Aberdeen hook, Roger Fisher, of Cwmbran, landed this 11lb 10oz cod at Porthcawl.



RECORD SPURDOG

This 16lb 11oz spurdog beats the current Welsh shore record. It was caught by Darren Gleed, of Swansea, who was fishing at Knab Rock, Mumbles. The fish took a fillet of mackerel on a Pennell-pulley rig with size 2/0 hooks. The official Welsh shore record is 5.982kg (13lb 15oz 12dr), although Dean Booker caught a 15lb 11oz spur earlier this year.



Halibut a highlight



A group of North East shore anglers fishing in Norway caught cod to 45lb and added a 36lb halibut on a spinning rod.

They were among four anglers from the Newcastle upon Tyne area who all caught fish over 30lb, had 38 double-figure fish and recorded new personal bests, mostly cod.

Callan Stevens (below right) caught the 45lb cod and added another of 35lb, as well as a 12lb ling, and Nigel Gemmell (below) caught the



36lb halibut on a spinning rod while fishing at Bodo. Nigel also caught a cod of 18lb.

Simon Coates (above left) caught cod of 32lb and 18lb, as well as a 9lb haddock. There were cod of 38lb and 18lb for Steven Surtees (above), who also landed a 7lb wolf fish.

"Highlight of the trip was Nigel's halibut; such a fight on the spinning rod," said Callan. They were based at Saltstraumen Brygge at Bodo.



Mark Briggs (below) caught this bass near his home at Seahouses, Northumberland. The fish took a ragworm bait.



Down on the English Channel coast, Rhys Stanton (below), of Southwick, West Sussex, landed this personal best bass of 6lb 6oz on a peeler crab bait while fishing the River Adur at Shoreham.





Having caught a 20lb cod earlier this year from Shetland, Tom Jenkinson (above), of Brae, landed a 27lb 3oz fish. The angler, from Brae, took it on a pulley rig baited with Bluey and dirty squid.

Also on Shetland, Sean McCaffrey (above middle), from Scalloway, and Liam Gunn (above right) landed a fine



brace of double-figure cod.

"It was our first brace of cod at the same time. The first was caught by Liam, and as we were netting his fish my rod folded over. A memorable experience," said Sean. "Liam's fish weighed 18lb and mine was in the early teens. They were caught on squid and Bluey."

EVENTS FOR FLY ENTHUSIASTS

Interested in catching fish on the fly? Then check out two events taking place in September and October.

A new competition being staged at Chichester is the Orvis Saltwater Fly Fishing Festival from September 3-6. This includes a reception on September 3, practice and teach-ins the following day, with the main competition on September 5-6.

The Bass Anglers' Sportfishing Society is providing a trophy for the longest bass. For information, visit the event's Facebook page, or www.orvis.co.uk. Information can also be obtained by email: andy@zambuni.com.

From October 1-4, the UK Saltwater Fly Fishing Festival takes place at St Mawes, Cornwall. The reception is on October 1, practice and teach-ins the following day, and competition October 3-4. For information, visit saltwaterflyfishing.com

WELSH CLUB AWARDS

The overall points winner for the Welsh Tope, Skate & Conger Club was Phil Russell.

At the club's presentation night, it was reported that although there were no new records in 2019, there were plenty of personal bests.

Colton Jones won five trophies for the best bass, smoothhound, bream, pollack and flatfish. Other trophies went to Ron Phillips for a 5lb 4oz pollack and 10lb 11oz spurdog; Andy Charles, 12lb spurdog and 9lb 4oz small-eyed ray; John Spannir, 4lb wrasse, 6lb cod, 6lb bass and 11lb 2oz spurdog; clubman of year, Gary Broome; Anthony Thomas, 36lb tope; Bob Christie, pollack and silver eel; outstanding service to the club, Alan Evans; Peter May, 6lb cod; John Thorne, 43lb and 37lb tope, 11lb 12oz ray and 4lb 8oz bass; Ned Elsey, 80lb blue shark and 3lb haddock.



This 18lb 10oz blonde ray fell to David Sims while fishing from his own boat off Sully Island, South Wales. The angler from Newport caught it on a squid and crab bait.



This 17lb 4oz undulate ray fell to a squid bait fished by Keith Jenkins, of Lymington, Hants, who was boat fishing in the Solent.

NEWS IN BRIEF

BEST FOR MANY A YEAR

Bridgend angler Rob David caught an 11lb 7oz cod at Ogmore-by-Sea in South Wales. It was his second-best from the shore, his best a 14-pounder caught 25 years ago. The fish took a lug and squid bait on a pulley rig with size 3/0 hooks.



COD ON A COCKTAIL

Michael Henriksen used a black lug and squid cocktail on a Pennell rig to catch this 11lb 4oz cod. The angler, from Cardiff, was fishing on the local charter boat Tuskar 2, skippered by Haydn Ross.



STORMING SUCCESS

Before Storm Ciara hit West Wales, Will Irving, of Llangranog, got out fishing for three hours. He caught a fish nearly every cast, finishing with 15 spurdogs to 14lb and a few bull huss.



Bait clampdown

Have your say on plans to limit what you can take

ANGLERS HAVE UNTIL MARCH 9 TO GIVE their views on potential legislation to limit the amount of bait collected by individuals in parts of the South West.

While commercial bait collectors will be able to apply for a permit, the proposed scheme will also impact those who want to find their own bait.

The formal proposal has been put out to consultation by Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (D&S IFCA), which manages the exploitation of sea fisheries resources within its district, and responses must be submitted by March 9.

Its findings on the bag limit consultation will be discussed at its By-law and Permitting Sub-Committee in May. It is expected a completed draft Hand Working Permit By-law would be completed by July and then put out for a six-week consultation. The by-law would need confirmation by Defra before coming into force.

Although this move affects the Devon and Severn region, it has the potential to be rolled out to other IFCA areas throughout the country.

D&S IFCA is inviting all stakeholders to respond, even if they don't take part in any of the hand-working collection of worms and shellfish. The consultation consists of five questions.

Hand-working activity includes the use of crab traps, bait digging and a range of hand-gathering methods, such as bait pumping,

collecting shellfish, hand-netting prawns, salting for razor shells and drop-netting.

The consultation document says: "The new Hand Working Permit By-law will take time to develop, and information, such as the findings of this exercise, will help inform the decision making and the drafting of the by-law."

The move will apply to the whole Devon and Severn district and is meant to enable D&S IFCA to manage hand-working fishing methods in a new way.

According to the consultation: "The needs of commercial fishers and recreational fishers are different, and this will be reflected in the restrictions that will apply."

The by-law will enable D&S IFCA to issue permits to commercial bait collectors, but the criteria needed to gain a permit have not been decided. The permit would determine catch, gear used, location and time restrictions appropriate to commercial activity.

Recreational fishers won't need a permit, but there will be rules set out in the by-law. Closed areas and sites will protect features, such as seagrass, while a series of catch limits for hand-working will be introduced.

The proposed bag limits for recreational anglers are open to consultation, but suggestions include 1kg of mussels per calendar day, 15 razor clams, 1kg of prawns/shrimps, 40 shore crabs, and 100 worms.

You can give your response at www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk/Consultation

NEWS IN BRIEF

PERSONAL BEST BASS

Gary Marsh caught this bass, a personal best that he estimated at 9-10lb, from Parton beach, Hartlepool. The Seaham SAC member, who lives in Hartlepool, accompanied by his pal Lee Griffiths, started fishing at 10am down to low water and then back up to high water.

They caught six bass, all returned, and four codling on squid and rag tipped with peeler crab legs and claws on a Pennell-pulley rig with size 2/0 and 4/0 hooks.



DOUBLE DELIGHT

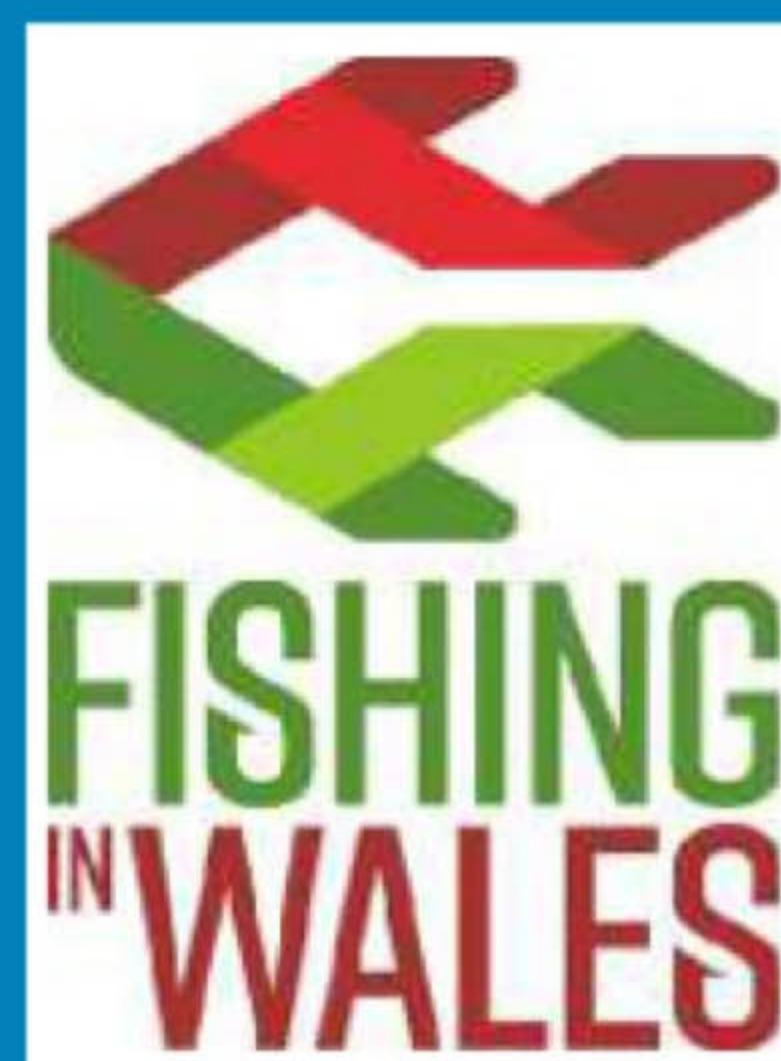
David Luton, from Bristol, bagged a 10lb 8oz bass on a six-inch Sidewinder Skerries Eel while fishing on Matthew Forrester's Silver Halo, out of Torquay.

BIRTHDAY PRESENT

Fishing on his birthday at Maryport North Pier, Cumbria, Evan Reece Barlow caught a 49cm bass. He used a Pennell-pulley rig with size 3/0 Sakuma hooks baited with black lug.



Spring launch for a major new angling resource



A new project to officially promote all types of fishing in Wales is being launched by the Angling Trust.

Named 'Fishing In Wales', the project is well underway, with an official launch planned for the spring. Visit Wales is the main funding partner, with additional match funding being provided by Natural Resources Wales.

The Angling Trust will be delivering the project, with the aim of building 'Fishing In Wales' as a brand that will be an important resource for anglers and for anyone who wants to go fishing for the first time.

Recreational rod-and-line fishing

is a valuable part of the Welsh rural economy, but it needs to be more widely acknowledged and promoted for it to grow and add further value, and to support rural areas to maximise revenue from tourism.

The aim is to encourage significantly more angling participation. To achieve this, the Angling Trust is producing a content-driven website as a solid foundation. Working in collaboration with Welsh anglers and writers, such as Sea Angler's Dave Lewis, the website will include key information on where, how and when to fish in Wales, covering all angling disciplines.

Beginner's luck

How about this for a first lure session for bass? Peter Baker fished with Robin Howard, of Brighton Inshore Fishing, and on his first cast caught a nine-pounder.

The angler, from Basildon, Essex, added another of 5lb. Both were released.

"I am overwhelmed catching a bass of this size, even though I still put it down to beginner's luck," he said. "Due to this, I am starting to build up my tackle so I can dedicate my fishing to saltwater lure fishing. One day that double-figure fish will be mine."



Six of the best at boat cod event

Paul Hollyoake won the Minehead Cod Challenge with six fish over the event's two days and recording two boat wins and the heaviest fish pool.

Fished from Minehead in January and based on a measure and return basis, with the longest length of fish winning the competition, Paul finished with 333.6cm to win the £1,000 prize.

It was a hard-fought event with some anglers having multiple catches, while others struggled to get a fish on the scoresheet. A total of 63 anglers fished and caught 90 cod, which, including some in double figures. Second was Dave Torric with 187.1cm followed by John Little with 155.9cm.



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The best fishing stories
from our readers



Ace of spurs

Watching your baits get mangled by a constant stream of dogfish is not for everyone, but, as James Madsen reveals, persistence paid off for his pal Steve Ace...

WE HAD BEEN EXPERIENCING a fairly mild and windy winter again this year, and this particular weekend was no exception. A strong south-westerly gale had swept the coastlines of the United Kingdom, with winds in excess of 50mph.

It can take a fair bit of motivation to get yourselves out in such conditions and, for many, it can remove the word pleasure from fishing. To be fair, in this respect we are reasonably blessed in the Bristol

Channel because shelter can be found to avoid the worst of the wind.

Steve Ace, who works in a Bristol tackle shop, is one person who is always up for a session, whatever the weather.

FISHING ADVENTURE

A big spring tide in January with strong south-westerly wind meant that a trip to Porlock Bay, located between Porlock Weir and Hurlstone Point in Somerset, was on the cards.

Having returned from his latest fishing

adventure in the far north of Norway, Steve was keen to join me for a session at Porlock Weir. This area of the Bristol Channel fishes well on bigger spring tides, mainly because the tidal movement stirs up the silt and colours the water.

Water clarity, or lack of it, gives most species of fish more confidence to feed. Obviously, this is more important when fishing in daylight.

January is a great month for targeting specimen fish like conger eels, bull huss and spurdogs around Porlock Bay. Mind you, ►

there aren't many months of the year when Porlock can't throw up a good specimen of some description. I left our plan of attack to Steve, who wanted to fish from low water up to high and then one hour of the back tide.

Our main objective would be to catch a spurdog. Only in recent years has it even been thought possible to target spurdogs from the open beaches around Somerset. In the past you'd rarely see anglers catching them anywhere east of the more western regions of North Devon.

Now, I'm being honest here when saying that neither of us was confident of seeing a spurdog in this session. The season's spurdog fishing had been very poor compared to recent years. There had only been occasional fish caught from some of the popular marks around North Devon, and very few, if any, caught on the Somerset coastline. Even the charter boats around Minehead were struggling for winter spurdogs.

Nevertheless, we set up with spurdogs in mind. Having said that, the only real difference was the addition of a wire biting trace on our pulley rigs. We both opted for a 65lb wire, I like the nylon-coated 19 strand from Cox & Rawle.

There is no need to go too big with your hooks for spurs because they don't have huge mouths. A hook up to size 4/0 is sufficient. I like Cox & Rawle hooks for this sort of fishing, and the Uptide Extras are perfect in size 3/0, along with a 4/0 Octopus for the second hook of the Pennell.

It's reasonably heavy ground around Porlock Bay, so a mainline of around 0.40mm (20-25lb), along with a good leader knot is recommended. You can also expect a good amount of tidal pull in this area, so we use 7-8oz grip weights to hold bottom on the bigger spring tides.

TIME TO CHANGE

On arrival at Porlock Weir, it was obvious that a many other anglers had the same idea. After all, this was a good venue choice taking into account the time of year, weather forecast, wind direction and the promise of no rain.

Steve and I squeezed in as best we could. I was quite happy with my spot on the beach, but Steve had other ideas. We set up and began fishing just after low water, which was around 1.30pm. My phone rang at 2.30pm and Steve proposed a change of plan.

After a brief chat, and because the wind was much lighter than originally forecast, we agreed to pack up and move to Bossington, a beach found in the far right-hand end of Porlock Bay. He had a hunch, and who was I to argue?

This would mean slightly different fishing times, as the best of the sport at Bossington on the big spring tides is generally around two hours either side of high water. Before that, Steve had to clear that change of plan with his better half, but that's a story for another time.

At Bossington, the tide pulls strongest around three hours into the flood, and it was still steaming through when we started

Bossington beach



fishing. The bigger specimens like it when the flow decreases, but the dogfish aren't that fussy. I had a dogfish attached to my sandeel and squid baits in around six minutes. Dogfish can be a real pain when specimen hunting at Bossington and they seem to particularly like frozen baits.

There had been a few blonde rays landed on the beach recently and that was my reason for trying a sandeel and squid. While I love catching dogfish in matches, continuously winding them in for pleasure is not my idea of fun. This was the secret to our success in this session – fresh bait, or as Steve likes to call it 'fresh death'.

FRESH BAIT

You can be catching dogfish after dogfish on



Blonde rays show too – this one fell to Jamie Sargeant

frozen baits, then you put out a fillet of fresh pouting and they are all but gone. From the off at Porlock, both Steve and I had a rod dedicated to catching bait, fishing small hooks filled with frozen black lug to target whiting, pout and poor cod; anything would do.

I got lucky at Porlock catching a poor cod, Steve did not. At Bossington, my first fillet of the fresh poor cod must have only just settled on the bottom before my line went slack. A conger eel of around 10lb had instantly fallen foul of the 'fresh death'. I looked across to Steve and he was still bagging up on dogfish.

My rod tip stayed static for some time, no doggies meant the baits were at least having a good soak, thus increasing my chances of catching a decent fish. A few lighter twitches on my rod tip resulted in a plump three-bearded rockling, to which I gave a loud cheer as it was pulled out. It was no prize fish and I was only joking around with Steve. It was potentially more bait, and bear in mind that he was struggling for fresh bait at this point.

This type of rockling is great to look at, being bright red/orange with black spots. I

looked down and began to feel sorry for it, but looked up and there was Steve beside me with his filleting knife. Humanely dispatched, Steve ran back to his rods with his prize.

For the record, I'd like my generosity to be noted because only five minutes later I heard him shout: "Jim I've got a spur!" As if giving him my bait wasn't enough, I got a right soaking landing this fish. It was a bit silly really. The fish was going up and down in the wash and I ran to grab it, thought better of it because of the sharp spike on its fin and ended up getting drenched by the next wave.

You don't want to get struck by the spine of a spurdog, either from the one at the base of the tail fin or the other at the dorsal fin. Likewise, you don't want to drown when landing a fish. Sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the moment and do silly things, so be aware. Ironically, by the time that wave cleared, Steve's spurdog was nearly two metres up from me. Now soaking wet, I grabbed the end of the tail, supported the head and passed it to Steve.

MORE THAN LUCK

On first view, this looked a cracking specimen because it was both long and fat. We popped her in the weigh sling and she registered 14lb on the scales. Several photographs were taken and then the fish was released. It was an amazing specimen, a new personal best and a Weston Outcasts club record. Steve was very happy and told me she put up a good fight.

Caught about 30 minutes after high water when the tide was still quite slack, consequently – because there was little to no tide – it had bent the rod tip right over with its first bite. Steve then had direct contact with the fish. Apparently, when winding her in she felt both light and heavy, probably as it kited from right to left.

As we walked back to the car, we agreed it had been a lucky fish to catch, taking into account the serious lack of spurs caught this season. Having said that, I've been fishing with Steve for long enough to know that when you've caught as many good specimens as he has, it's really more than just luck.

Knowledge and experience are key things, along with putting in the rod hours on the beaches, at the right time of year. Spurdogs can be caught in the Bristol Channel between the months of November through to March. Remember, they don't like clear water on the shallower beaches, and a good majority of anglers target them at night.

It's also worth noting that it was undoubtedly the fresh bait that made the difference in this session. Without it we would have most likely continued to catch only dogfish. ■



Destination dab

Seventeen-year-old Tom England sets out to catch this tasty flatfish. Simple enough, but it had to weigh more than a pound...

**BEEN THERE,
CAUGHT THIS!**
The best fishing stories
from our readers

FROM MAY TO SEPTEMBER I FISHED for smoothhounds in South Wales, but winter called for a new challenge. I decided to seek out a species I'd never caught or tried to catch before.

The choice turned to flatfish – but not any old flatfish. Along with my fishing pal, Kevin Shortman, we decided to challenge ourselves to catch a dab weighing more than 1lb.

The venue would be Burry Port, located west of Llanelli on the coast of South Wales and facing the Gower Peninsula. After a hour-and-a-half of travelling from my home in Tonypany, we arrived at the mark, close to the lighthouse, which we'd fish from noon until 7pm.

Immediately, we faced a few issues. The main one being the amount of freshwater running through the Burry Inlet on the fairly large tide. The flow of water from the River Lougher is strong here. Added to that were masses of suspended seaweed.

Three hours into the session we'd caught nothing, but low water was imminent. Not long after the tide turned, we finally encountered some dabs. Kevin caught the first, which was only a few ounces. Fewer than five minutes later I was into my first-ever dab, which weighed 8oz.

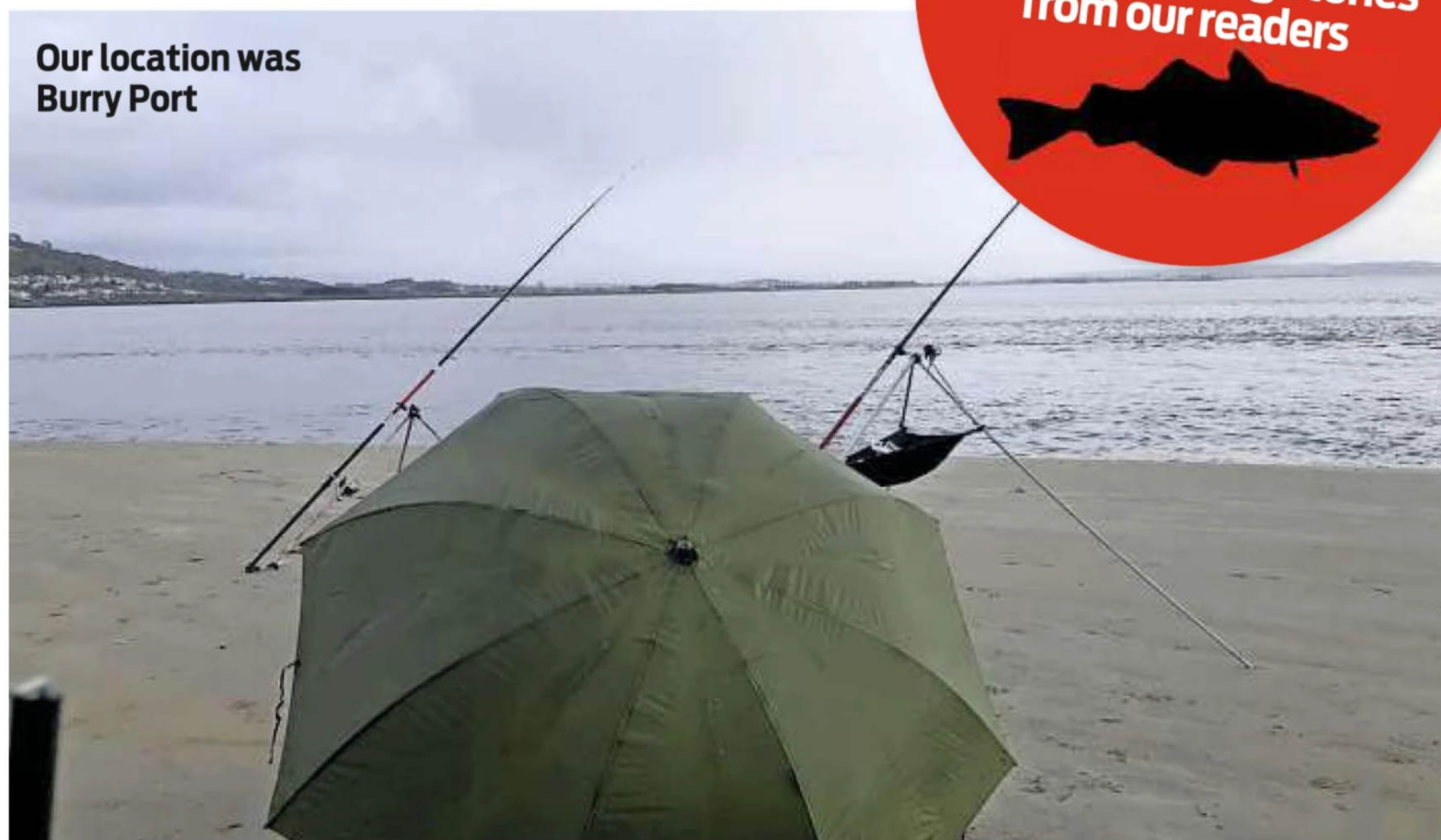
As darkness fell and the fishing picked up, the bigger dabs appeared. The best two were a 1lb 5oz fish for me, and 1lb 2oz for Kevin, so we beat our target of 1lb. After these few bigger specimens, we caught only occasional fish, which was a disappointment because Burry Port is normally a prolific venue. Conditions were not at the best, but we battled on and ended with eight dabs.

HANDY TIPS

Dabs can be tricky to catch as their mouths are so small, so your hook size and bait should be chosen accordingly. I used a two-hook flapper with size 1/0 Aberdeen hooks with a rig body line of 50lb and a snood of 25lb line. The weight was a 3½oz plain lead; smaller than I'm used to, but they helped me spot a bite easier than with a 6oz sinker.

Dabs can give an aggressive bite, but mostly just rest on your line while eating the bait. Ideally, this requires a sensitive rod with a 3-6oz casting rating, which gives more noticeable bites. However, during this session, I had to use a stiffer rod due to

Our location was
Burry Port



the troublesome weed and strong tide.

Our bait was local black lug, which we used in bits around two inches long threaded on the hook. I had planned to take mackerel, which can be cut into 1cm x 3cm strips, but left it in the freezer.

Don't be too keen to strike at the first rattle on the rod tip. Instead, wait because this might be the fish pulling at the bait. Sit on your hands for perhaps three rattles until retrieving in your rig. In addition, check your rig and bait every 15-25 minutes.

THE VENUE

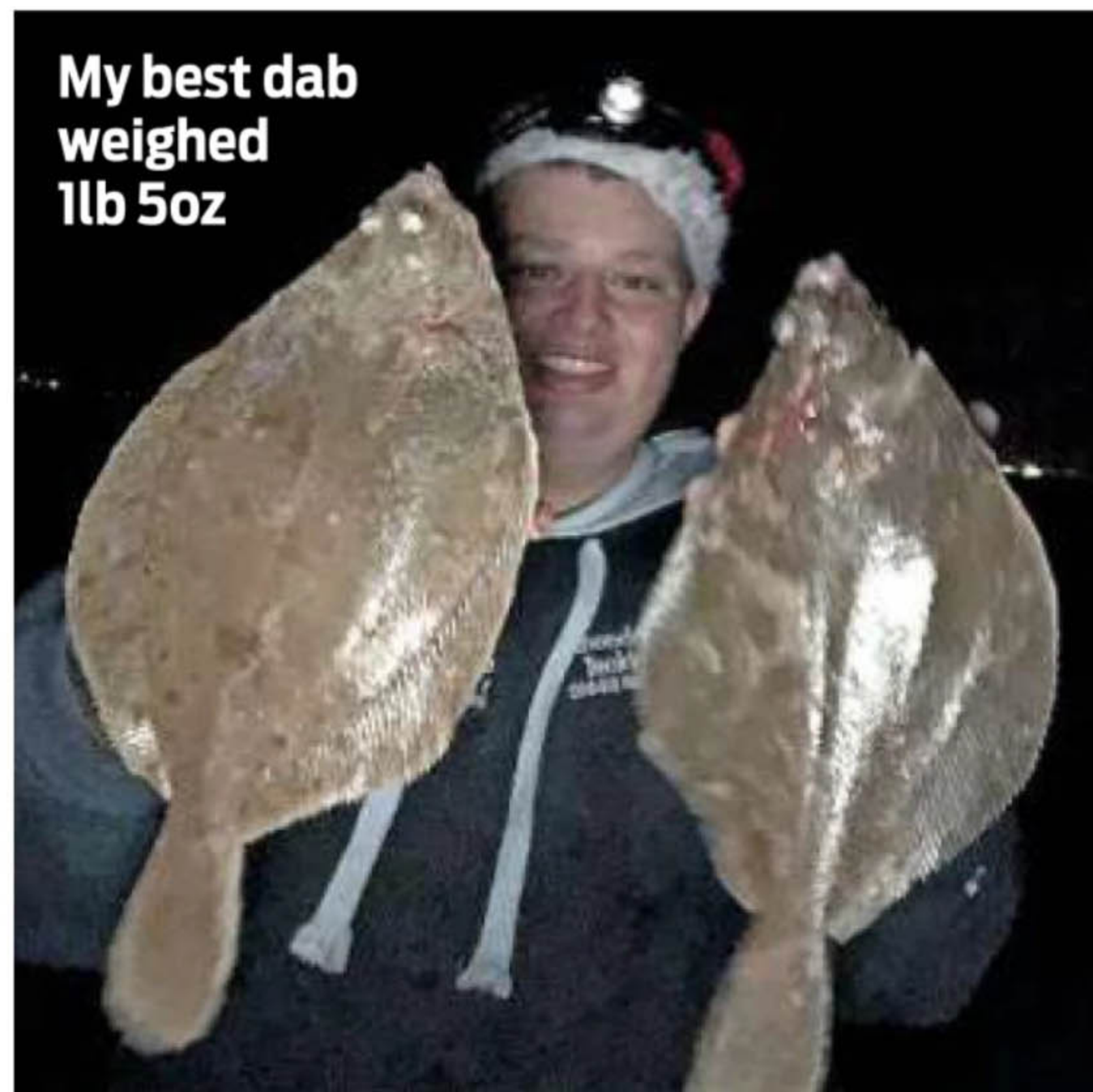
Burry Port is an ideal location for anglers of all ages, being easily accessible. Always check the tide times so you know you are safe.

In the summer it's always good for mullet, particularly golden greys, and some big ones

My first-ever
dab at 8oz



My best dab
weighed
1lb 5oz



have come out here. Other species include bass, whiting, flounders and dabs.

Use only one rod. With two rods, it's a recipe for tangles if there is a lot of tidal flow. Because the weed can be a nuisance during parts of the session, you don't want to be removing weed from two rods. Stick with one rod and a two or three-hook flapper rig.

On arrival at the mark, check the ground for features, such as deeper areas, and where the tide flows and in which direction. Always look for clues to what the fish are eating. We noticed a lot of worm casts, so it was a no-brainer to use worms, but there was lots of razor clam shells too. ■

■ **SEE THE SESSION:** This session was documented on Tom's YouTube channel.



The late show

Stewart Herd tells
how perseverance
will bring results...

**BEEN THERE,
CAUGHT THIS!**
The best fishing stories
from our readers



***"Everything was happening
so quickly that we were
having to put the fish in a
deep rockpool to prevent
our second rods being lost
to another strong bite"***

WHILE IT'S FAIR TO SAY anglers should never flog a dead horse when sport is poor, there are occasions when it pays to keep the faith.

I wanted to enjoy a final session before departing on a four-month tour in Africa with the British Army, so, along with my pal Matty Robson, had been watching the weather for a chance to visit south-west Scotland. Thankfully, the forecast predicted a drop in the wind as well as a change of direction.

It was our cue to set off from our homes in Easington, County Durham, for our next fishing adventure. With a few other mates tagging along too, we hoped for a session to remember on the thornback rays.

Our first baits, fished on Pennell pulley rigs, were in the water four hours before high tide. With a big swell and strong headwind, we carried on in the knowledge the wind would eventually drop and change direction. Disappointingly, the fishing was slow, with the first bite coming two hours before high tide. The big swell made it hard to land the ray, and eventually the hooklength snapped and the ray was gone.

Not all hope was lost because we knew that where there was one ray, there should be another. Not long after that disappointment, my rod started bouncing in the stand. I picked it up, waited for another indication and then set the hooks. After a short fight the ray was landed and weighed 8lb 12oz. Following a few pictures, the fish was released.

ALL QUIET

Things went quiet until an hour after high tide, when suddenly my rod showed a cracking bite that very nearly put it on the floor. I ran over, picked up the Century Trooo rod and everything dropped slack. I wound in the slack on the Shimano Bullseye reel and felt



Matty Robson with a fine ray of 10lb 8oz

a knock; I was in again, this time with a ray weighing 9lb 14oz, which was a personal best. Being only 2oz from being a double, it was a bit frustrating, but I knew the big ones would be around.

As the sea began to flatten, we hoped the fish would come on as expected. Not long after, another member of our group had a positive bite and reeled in a 3lb codling.

Without a bite for an hour or so, the others decided to take the long walk back to the car to head for home. Matty and me stuck it out and, thankfully, things started to look more promising. The wind switched direction and was on our backs, and the sea had flattened considerably. With plenty of bait left, we persevered.

As the light faded, Matty finally got a decent bite, set the hooks and the fish was on. He reeled in a ray around 8lb. With darkness upon us, the fish came on the feed and in the next few hours we caught 14 thornbacks, including a first double of 10lb 8oz for Matty.

Everything was happening so quickly that we were having to put the fish in a deep rockpool to prevent our second rods being lost to another strong bite. There were numerous times when our rods were pulled from the tripod because we had forgotten to slacken off the drag on our reels.

It was an amazing session and a fitting one before hanging up my rods for four months before my next overseas tour of duty with the Army. ■



LEFT: I bagged two lovely rays of 8lb 12oz and a pb of 9lb 14oz

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Fortnight of fishing

Holderness Coast angler Matt Hope was determined to make the most of some valuable time off...



The size of cod varied over the two weeks

WELL, THE COD SEASON ON the Holderness Coast has been eventful, with loads of small codling caught throughout the area, but trying to find the better stamp of fish has been hard work.

Depending when you read this, some of you may be among the multitudes who, on March 7-8, are about to fish or have fished the European Open Beach Championships on this eroding coastline.

This is my regular fishing area. I try to fit in as much fishing as I can here, but two weeks off gave me the chance to try as many tides as possible, family commitments permitting.

After finishing work, I was straight out on the evening's tide for a short session. I wanted to fish the last hour of the flood, another over the top and an hour or so back down.

A north-easterly blow was settling down and the forecast was calm, with mostly westerly or south-westerly light winds making it ideal for fishing.

My chosen venue was known as Rectory, between Hilston and Tunstall. I had this spot to myself. I made my way to the clifftop get-down, only to find it had been washed away. I walked for a few hundred metres but couldn't find anywhere safe to reach to the beach.

With the sea already washing up around the bottom of the cliff, and with a good hour of the flood to go, I thought it would be safer to fish from a flat grassy spot on the clifftop. There is a good gully here, running all the way to Hilston.

I fished two rods, one in the gully at around 60 to 80 yards, and the other blasted out as far as I could. I ended up with nine codling, nothing big, around 1lb 8oz to 2lb 8oz, with all but one coming from the close-range rod. The long-range rod was plagued by whiting.

ALMOST PERFECT

Next morning I collected my dad, Bill, and we made our way to the coast after a visit to the tackle shop to stock up on dirty squid. I'd used the last of my worms, so we planned to dig some more. However, the tide was too small

to dig at the northern end of the Holderness, so we headed for the Spurn mudflats. Hard work at the best of times, an easy day's fishing afterwards was in order. My dad turns 70 this year, so I didn't want to burn him out.

We called in at Easington for a quick look over low water on our way to Spurn. There looked to be a few good holes and a slope to the beach.

Bait digging completed, it was back to Easington, by which time a few more anglers had set up in front of the access slope. It meant a short walk north towards the gas works to find a bit of space. Conditions seemed almost perfect; no wonder so many others had ventured out.

As we walked past the anglers, they confirmed that fish had been landed. One of them was Gary Pye, from North East Tackle Supplies, in Ryhope, who had made the journey down to the Holderness Coast.

While setting up the rods, I noticed other anglers dragging in a lot of weed, which dampened our spirits; weed can be a real pain on the area's southern beaches. It seemed



Easington beach at low water



**BEEN THERE,
CAUGHT THIS!**
The best fishing stories
from our readers



Fresh lug in trays ready for the fridge



Several bass
showed at
Easington

Bill Hope
fishing at
Easington

almost impossible to fish at any great range.

After retrieving our first casts and plucking the weed off our shockleader knots and rigs, we cast out freshly baited pulley rigs. This time we fished closer, around 60 to 75 yards. It paid off and we were soon into fish, which definitely had a taste for our fresh lug and squid. We ended up with more than a dozen codling between us, but nothing over 3lb. Again, there were loads of whiting, but also a welcome bass apiece.

Back at home, I put the remainder of the lug into trays in my bait fridge, and the squid into the freezer. I checked on Facebook and spotted a picture of Gary Pye with a couple of nice fish, the best a 7lb cod, from his session.

CHANGE OF PLAN

Next morning I'd had messages from friends who had done well with better-quality fish. That information changed my plans. I'd go further north to Grimston to get away from the crowds and the weed. It's a long walk and has high cliffs, which deters a lot of anglers, and limited parking is also a problem.

I'd started at low water and planned to fish the tide up to top water. Footprints left in the sand signified that the only part of the beach that I would not get washed off by the incoming tide was by the get-down.

Rather than lose this bit of beach, I stayed

there. Had there been a slightly smaller tide, I would have fished further right.

Things started slowly. The only decent bite I hooked into felt like a good fish, but it found a snag. I managed to retrieve what looked like a dead rose bush covered in more weed, but the fish had gone.

After my pal Adam Peach arrived about half tide up, the fishing improved slightly and we had half-a-dozen small codling each. I was disappointed we hadn't found a better fish. On the positive side, the tides were picking up in size, offering a good chance of pumping some decent bait.

GARY'S DOUBLE

After a few days off, I was back in the truck and heading to the next venue. I called in at a couple of marks to see how busy they were. The first was Hilston. It was fairly busy, but weed wasn't a problem, although the cliffs and get-downs were a mess.

As a result, I headed further south to the outskirts of Withernsea, where I found a suitable spot. The wind had swung and the sea had lifted, although it wasn't the flat calm conditions that I'd been fishing. It felt good for a fish or two. I thought the extra movement would stir things up, so I walked to the left, passing Gary Storey, who was fishing a club match. He'd caught three ►



My 6lb 12oz fish
at Hilston



Two of the dozen
codling caught
at Easington

“Gary lifted the lid on his fish bucket to show me a cod that seemed to be wrapped one and a half times around the interior of the container”



Gary Storey caught this 12-pounder at Hilston

cod in as many casts to a gulley at around 100 yards. His third fish was a cod around 4lb.

I walked further up the beach, well out the way of the other anglers and set up. My first bite was a massive thump on the rod tip followed by slack line. I reeled like mad, caught up to the fish, felt a big thump on the rod and the fish got off. Only a bass swims as fast as that. My next bite resulted in a small codling, which was followed by a massive pull on the rod tip. I was straight on it and a nice bass came ashore.

Gary then asked if I'd seen what he just landed. I hadn't. He lifted the lid on his fish bucket to show me a cod that seemed to be wrapped one and a half times around the interior of the container. My bass seemed so inferior. I guessed the cod was around 12lb-plus. It was his shore-caught personal best and only the second double-figure cod I'd heard of so far this season from the Holderness. He'd caught a 9lb 8oz fish only a week earlier.

At the top of the tide, I had a small nod on the rod tip and expected another small codling. To my surprise, it turned out to be

the best fish I'd had on for weeks. It weighed a tidy 6lb 12oz.

LAST CAST

The following night, my dad and I returned. The sea had flattened and the whiting and weed were a nuisance. I caught five fish, at 3-4lb. While we packed away our gear, one of my dad's rods pulled over and he landed a 6lb 4oz cod.

We returned for a third night, but soon regretted it because it was a whiting-fest. The sea was calm and we couldn't get the spot we'd fished before, so we moved further up the beach, but in the same gulley. I caught five small codling among the whiting, while my dad had whiting and dogfish.

After a night off, I fished a midweek match in a strong southerly wind. I fancied a change of venue, particularly after seeing some reports that the River Humber was fishing well for boat anglers. The match time didn't really suit fishing the coast either. I went to Old Hall and had landed 11 codling, which, at around 1lb, were undersize and smaller than

the usual stamp. Fishing the river hadn't paid off. Surprisingly, the coast fished well, even a couple of rays made an appearance in the flat calm conditions.

I waited until the weekend to use up the last of my worms, even though a large northerly swell was not ideal for the Holderness Coast. Back at Easington, I was surprised to see it so busy.

Ready to make my first cast, I walked to the left, uptide, about 25 yards and hit the cast as hard as I could, trying to find some depth to the water. I paid out some line, hoping the rig and 6oz grip lead would settle somewhere out in front of me. I repeated the same process with my second rod.

On returning to the first rod, the line had gone slack. I thought the weight had pulled out, but as I picked up the rod, I felt a fish, which turned out to be a bass. It was hard going for the next three hours, but I had two more slack line bites, cod of 2lb and 5lb. These were the only three fish I caught, but it was an enjoyable day's fishing to round off a couple of weeks. ■

BASS ANGLERS' SPORTFISHING SOCIETY

Reasons to be cheerful

It's time to ensure there are bigger fish to catch



Words by DAVID CURTIS

THE BEST NEWS AT THE END OF 2019 WAS WHEN the EU Council agreed to give recreational anglers a two bass a day bag limit in 2020, which started on March 1 and runs to November 30.

This lifts our share of the bass catch to about 25 per cent, which is broadly in line with the share we had in 2014 before the bass restrictions were introduced. However, it is considerably less than the share we enjoyed before the commercial bass fishery started ramping up its own catches.

Good news too, that the overall 2020 bass fishing opportunities agreed are in line with the scientists' lower sustainable catch recommendation, giving the bass stock a good opportunity to further recover in 2020.

A massive thank you to all of you who supported our campaign last year for a fair deal for bass and bass anglers. The science was on our side. When the decision makers were bombarded with emails from sea anglers pointing this out and asking for an increase, they had little option but to agree.

The bass fishery is now well placed for recovery: fishing pressure is just a quarter of what it was before 2015; the minimum landing size of 42cm gives more bass a chance to reproduce before being killed; the most unsustainable forms of fishing (pair trawling and drift netting targeting spawning aggregations) have been banned; the stock biomass was predicted to increase in 2019; and by February all under 10 metre fishing vessels will have to record their landings before they unload, making enforcement of bass catch limits easier. And the two bass per day for nine months bag limit means sea anglers are well-positioned to reap the benefits of the restrictions. All we need now are one or two strong year-classes to really bump up the stock level.

THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, we are going to be pushing for a bigger bass stock target. Sea angling is by far the most valuable part of the bass fishery and it should be managed to deliver what sea anglers value: an abundant stock that increases our catching rate. The commercial target of Maximum Sustainable Yield is not sufficiently precautionary and will not generate an abundant stock.

We also want a more natural age/size stock structure, so sea anglers stand a better chance of catching bigger bass.

Overfishing by the commercials has stripped out many of the big bass and it will take several years of low fishing pressure to replace them.

This is an exciting year for sea anglers. The bass fishery is positioned for recovery, sea anglers have won a major battle to get their rights recognised, and we are on the cusp of recreational fishing being recognised in the UK Fisheries Bill, which will open the door to funding for the promotion and development of sea angling. ■

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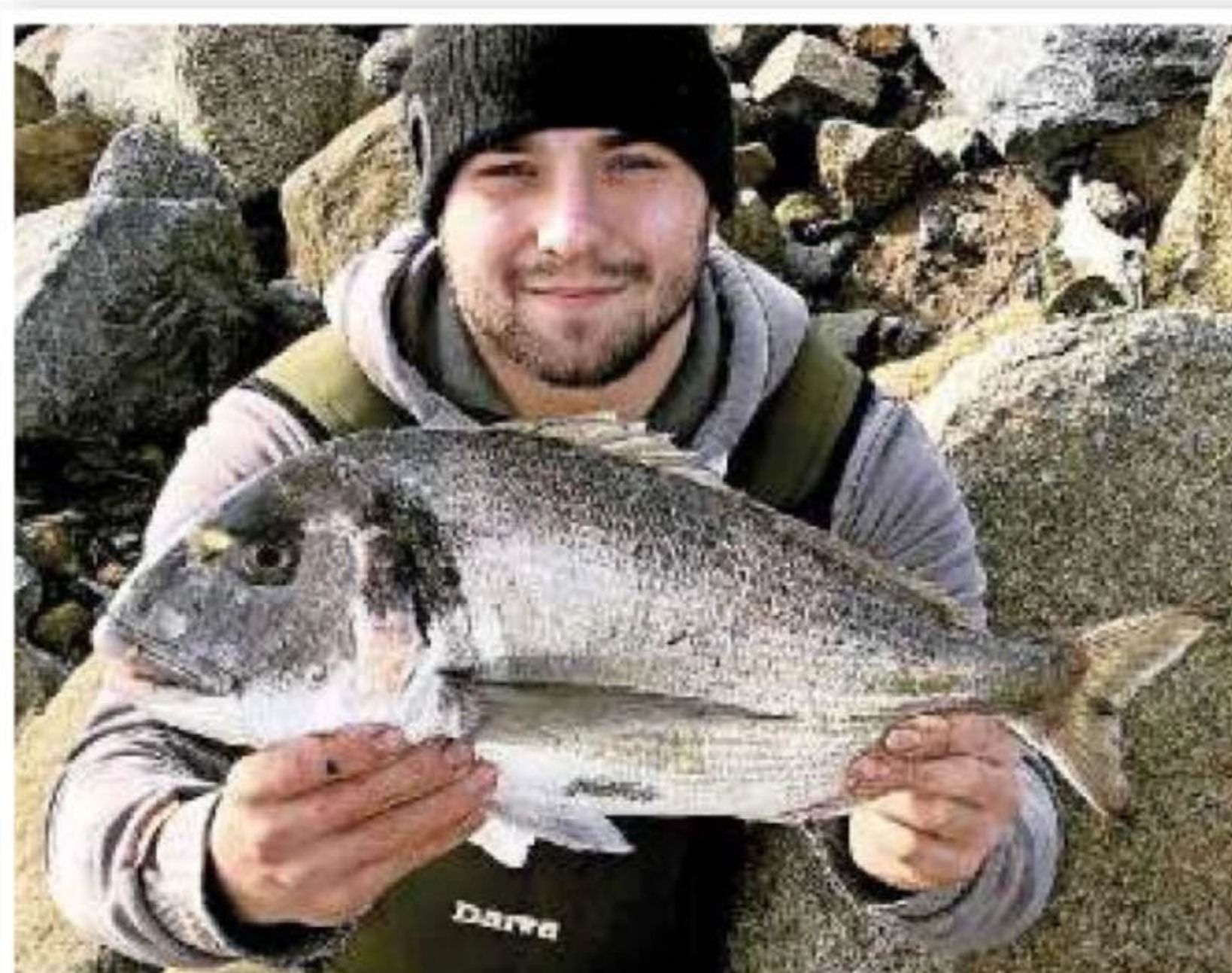


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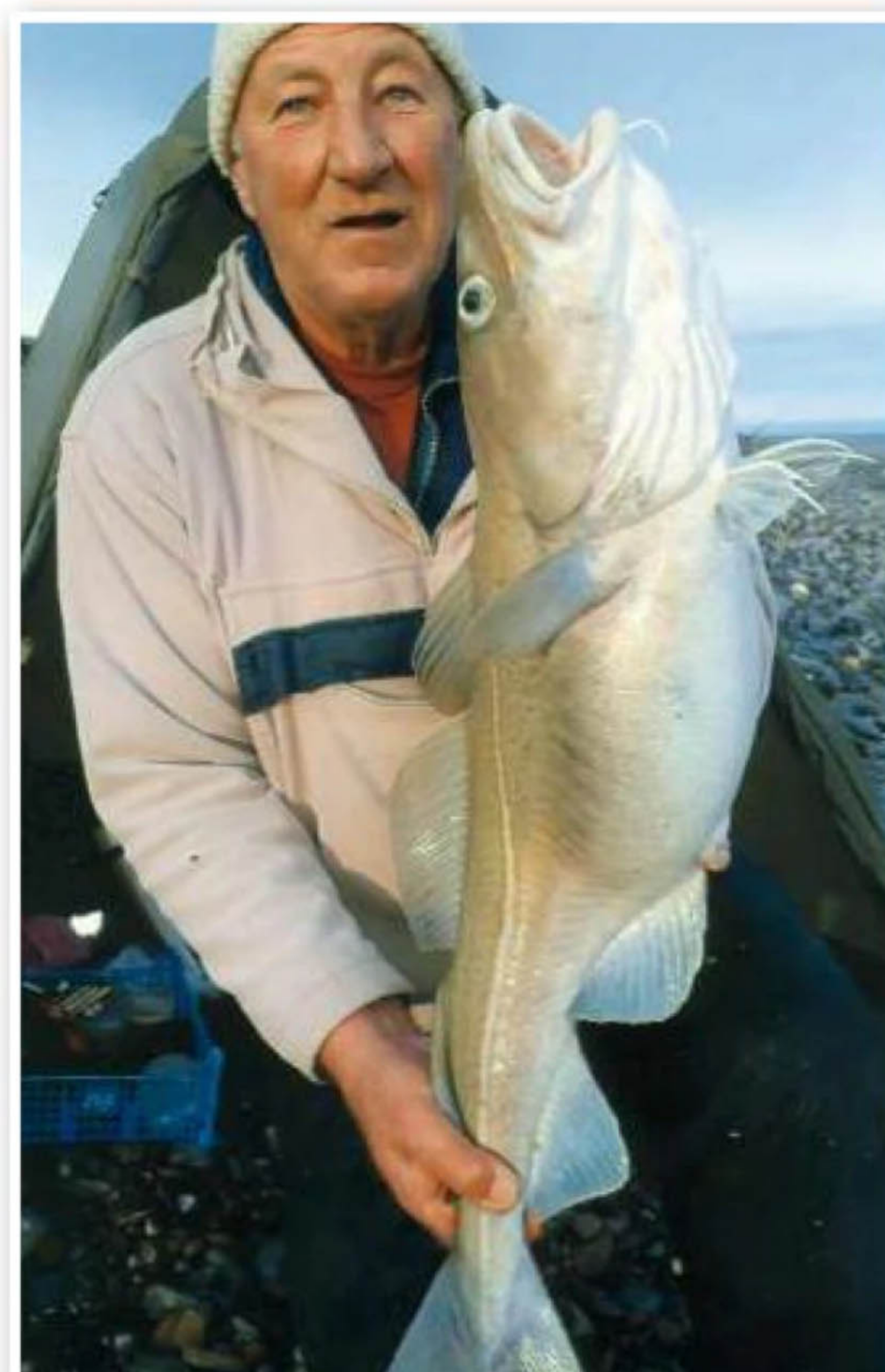
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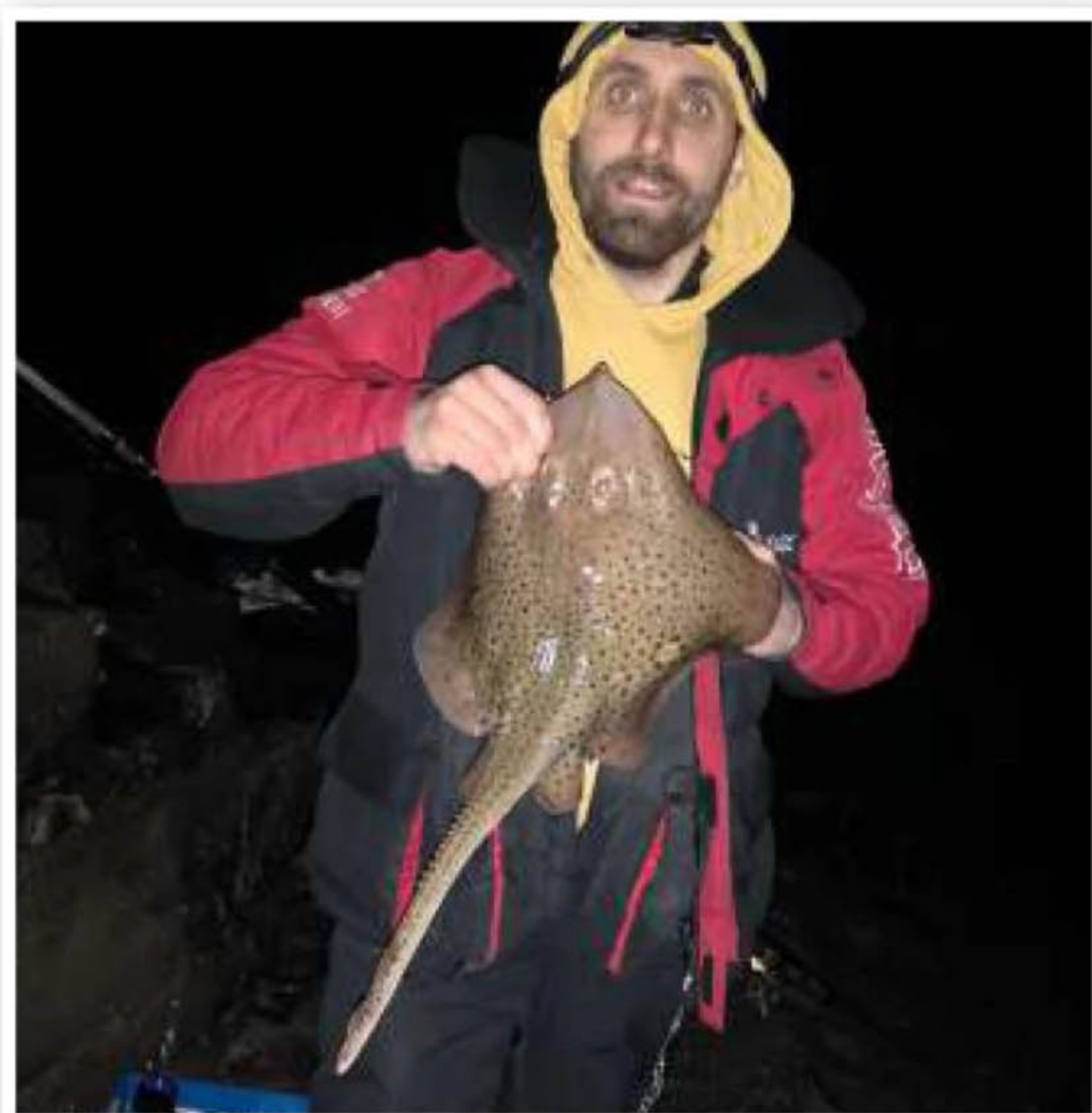
Each issue we award a superb Shimano reel to the captor of the best shore fish and best boat-caught fish, both chosen on merit. There is no choice of prize, which is awarded at our discretion.



Ollie Handley, St Sampson, Guernsey.
Fish: 5lb 4oz gilthead bream. **Bait:** Verm on a running leger rig. **Venue:** St Sampson, Guernsey. **Date:** January 20.



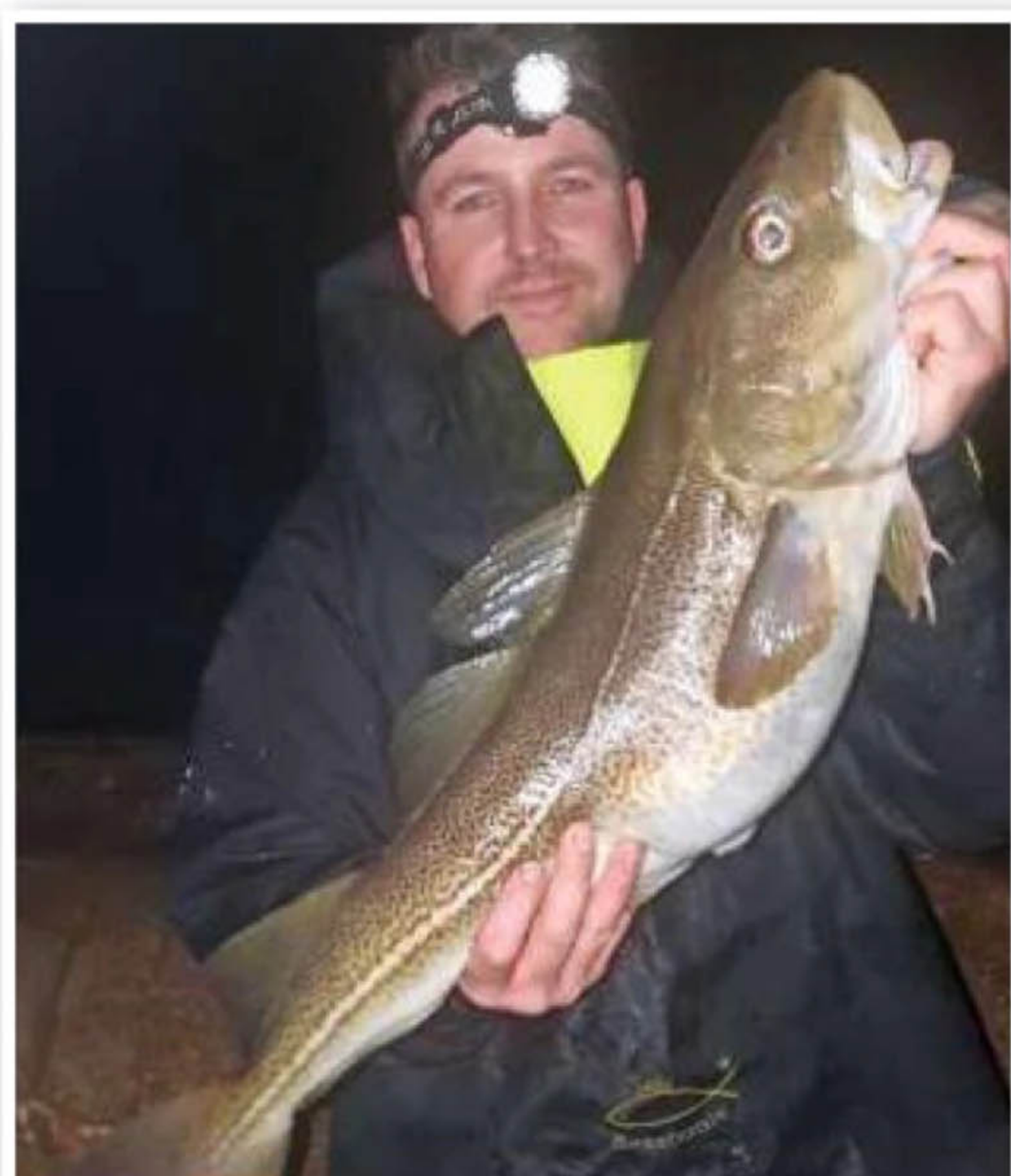
Stuart Milton, Bridgwater, Somerset. **Fish:** 13lb 5oz cod. **Bait:** Lug and squid. **Venue:** Lilstock, Somerset. **Date:** January 30.



Perry Moore, Caerau, Maesteg.
Fish: 4lb 11oz spotted ray. **Bait:** Bluey and mackerel. **Venue:** Witches Point, South Wales. **Date:** February 10.



Dave Ball, Nuneaton, Warks.
Fish: 17lb spurdog. **Bait:** Mackerel and squid. **Venue:** Valkyrie (Glenn Cairns), Northney Marina, Hants. **Date:** February 5.



Eddie Hackett, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear.
Fish: 10lb 1oz cod. **Bait:** Bluey and mussel on a Pennell-pulley rig. **Venue:** Tynemouth, Tyne & Wear. **Date:** Jan 16.



Carl Osborne, Teignmouth, Devon.
Fish: 2lb 6oz flounder. **Bait:** Peeler crab on a two-hook flapper rig. **Venue:** Teign estuary, Devon. **Date:** January 19.

MONTHLY WINNERS
■ **SHORE:** Ellen Stockley, 18lb 1oz thornback ray.
■ **BOAT:** Clive Hurst, 20lb spurdog.

MISSION BADGE WINNERS

BREAM SHORE

Ollie Handley, St Peter Port, 5-4
gilthead, St Sampson

COALFISH

Sean McCaffrey, Scalloway, 7-8*,
Hellister
Colin Paterson, Dunrossness, 6-9,
Shetland

COD SHORE

Eddie Hackett, Sunderland, 10-1,
Tynemouth
Tom Jenkinson, Shetland, 27-3*,
Shetland
Sean McCaffrey, Scalloway, 25-2*,
Hellister
Stuart Milton, Bridgwater, 13-5*,
Lilstock
Colin Paterson, Dunrossness, 14-0,
Shetland Islands

COD BOAT

Dean Gibbs, Wokingham, 22-10*,
Hayling Island

CONGER BOAT

Gareth Dixon, London, 42-0*, Rye

FLATFISH SHORE

Ian Gruncell, Westbury, 2-0 flounder,
Burnham-on-Sea
Carl Osborne, Teignmouth, 2-6
flounder, Teign estuary
Franklin Powell, Portsmouth, 2-14
flounder, Poole
J Powell, Havant, 2-9 flounder, Poole

POLLACK SHORE

Dave Allen, Broadford, 8-14, Mallaig

RAY SHORE

Keith George, Fareham, 12-0
undulate*, Selsey
Ollie Handley, St Peter Port, 13-8,
St Sampson
Steve Hobson, Newport, 11-7
undulate*, Atherfield
Stuart Milton, Bridgwater, 3-6
spotted*, Minehead
Perry Moor, Maesteg, 4-11 spotted,
Witches Point
Scott Pettitt, Eastbourne, 11-6
thornback*, Birling Gap
Jack Reynolds, Weston-super-Mare,
7-8 small-eye*, Minehead
Ellen Stockley, Torquay, 18-1
thornback, Salcombe
Ryan Thompson, Jarrow, 12-9
thornback*, Balcary

RAY BOAT

Michael Bryant, Clevedon, 15-0
thornback*, Clevedon
Paul Griffiths, Fareham, 14-0
undulate*, Portsmouth
Paul Milkins, Weymouth, 15-0
undulate*, Weymouth

SHARK SHORE

Jack Reynolds, Weston-super-Mare,
8-8 bull huss*, Minehead

SHARK BOAT

Dave Ball, Nuneaton, 17-0 spurdog*,
Northney
Clive Hurst, Fareham, 20-0 spurdog*,
Portsmouth
Dave Wright, Aldershot, 18-0
spurdog, Littlehampton

* denotes catch and release



Justin Powell, Havant, Hants.
Fish: 2lb 9oz flounder. **Bait:** Black
lug on a two-hook rig. **Venue:** Poole
Harbour, Dorset. **Date:** January 19.



Ryan Thompson, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear.
Fish: 12lb 9oz thornback ray. **Bait:** Bluey &
squid on a Pennell rig. **Venue:** Balcary Flat
Rock, Dumfries & Galloway. **Date:** Jan 18.

Dave Allen, Broadford, Isle of Skye.
Fish: 8lb 14oz pollack. **Bait:** 40g lure.
Venue: Mallaig, Highlands. **Date:** Jan 19.



Gareth Dixon, London. **Fish:** 42lb conger
eel. **Bait:** Herring. **Venue:** Rye, East
Sussex. **Date:** January 19.

BADGES

Shimano Mission badges are sent out after the catches have appeared in Sea Angler magazine

Colin Paterson,
Dunrossness,
Shetland.

Fish: 14lb cod.
Bait: Mackerel
on a pulley
rig. **Venue:**
Shetland.
Date: Jan 16.

ENTRY FORM

Badges are sent out after your name appears in the magazine.

Name

Age

Address

Postcode

Tel

Email

Type of fish

Caught at

Weight

Date caught

Bait/Rig

Caught from: shore ☐ boat ☐

Boat name

Skipper

Port

Witness & tel

My fish was returned ☐
was not returned ☐

Post to: Shimano Mission,
Sea Angler magazine, Media House,
Lynchwood, Peterborough PE2 6EA.
Alternatively, email picture & details
to: SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk

Yes please, keep me up to date via email with the
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Media Ltd, Bauer Radio Ltd and H Bauer Publishing



YOUR MISSION TARGETS...

Catch a fish of this weight or above in your region to qualify for a badge. Use the entry form (left) and send to the address shown. Alternatively, you can email the required details required and your picture to SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk

	SHORE	BOAT
Bass	8lb	9lb
Black bream	2lb	3lb
Red bream	2lb	3lb
Couch's & Pandora's bream	1lb 8oz	1lb 8oz
Gilthead bream	4lb	4lb
Ray's bream	3lb	3lb
Brill	3lb	5lb
Bull huss	8lb	12lb
Cod	7lb	15lb
Conger	20lb	40lb
Dab & megrim	1lb	1lb
Dover/lemon sole	2lb	2lb
Flounder	2lb	2lb
Ling	5lb	19lb
Mullet	4lb	5lb
Golden grey mullet	2lb	2lb
Plaice	2lb	4lb
Pollack/coalfish	6lb	12lb
Common skate	60lb	100lb
Blonde ray	12lb	17lb
Thornback ray	9lb	14lb
Small-eyed/undulate	7lb	11lb
Ray (other)	3lb	5lb
Sting/eagle ray	20lb	25lb
Smoothhound	10lb	14lb
Spurdog	7lb	11lb
Tope	27lb	35lb
Turbot	10lb	13lb
Wrasse (ballan)	4lb	4lb
Wrasse (other)	1lb	1lb
Blue shark	-	60lb
Porbeagle/thresher	-	100lb

SEND US YOUR ENTRIES AND
WIN SOME GREAT PRIZES



■ The winners of the best shore-caught and boat-caught fish win a Shimano reel. The sponsor reserves the right to send an alternative prize of equal value.



THE RULES...

■ Only fish caught since February 2020 are eligible. ■ We must see a picture of the fish. ■ We may refuse an entry. ■ You can claim one badge per species in an issue. ■ A further badge can be awarded in future only if you set a new personal best. ■ Enter by post using the coupon; by email (please include information requested on the postal form) to SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk ■ Prizes are as stated (Shimano reserves the right to send alternatives). ■ No correspondence will be entered into.



Dean Gibbs, Wokingham, Berks.
Fish: 22lb 10oz cod. **Bait:** Squid on a running leger rig. **Venue:** Private boat, Hayling Island, Hants. **Date:** January 19.



Ian Gruncell, Westbury, Wilts.
Fish: 2lb flounder. **Bait:** Lug and squid on a pulley rig. **Venue:** Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset. **Date:** February 7.



Keith George, Fareham, Hants.
Fish: 12lb undulate ray. **Bait:** Mackerel fillet on a Pennell rig. **Venue:** Selsey, West Sussex. **Date:** January 10.



Steve Hobson, Newport, Isle of Wight.
Fish: 11lb 7oz undulate ray. **Bait:** Pouting on a pulley rig. **Venue:** Atherfield, Isle of Wight. **Date:** February 1.



Paul Milkins, Weymouth, Dorset.
Fish: 15lb undulate ray. **Bait:** Mackerel and squid on a Pennell rig. **Venue:** Flamer IV (Colin Penny), Weymouth, Dorset. **Date:** January 19.



Ellen Stockley, Torquay, Devon.
Fish: 18lb 1oz thornback ray. **Bait:** Peeler crab on a Pennell rig. **Venue:** Salcombe, Devon. **Date:** January 19.

MISSION RECORD HOLDERS

BASS

■ **Shore:** 19lb 13oz 8dr
John S Locker
■ **Boat:** 19lb 4oz
Wayne Milton

BLACK BREAM

■ **Shore:** 5lb 5oz 1dr
C Le Monnier
■ **Boat:** 6lb 6oz
Tony Heart

COUCH'S BREAM

■ **Shore:** 2lb 15oz 1dr
Lynton Carre
■ **Boat:** 7lb Becky
Lee Hodges

GILTHEAD BREAM

■ **Shore:** 9lb 8oz
Scott Smy
■ **Boat:** 10lb 2oz
Roger Simcox

PANDORA'S BREAM

■ **Shore:** 1lb 2oz
Baz Wheeler

RAY'S BREAM

■ **Shore:** 6lb 1oz
Jordan Colwell

RED BREAM

■ **Boat:** 6lb 4oz
Patrick Meegan

BRILL

■ **Shore:** 6lb 12oz
Mark Griggs
■ **Boat:** 13lb 10oz
Tony Hayward

TURBOT

■ **Shore:** 20lb 2oz
Eddy Barham
■ **Boat:** 32lb 1oz
Steve Scally

BULL HUSS

■ **Shore:** 21lb 9oz
M Urquhart
■ **Boat:** 23lb
D Nicholson

COD

■ **Shore:** 32lb
Adrian Lloyd
■ **Boat:** 43lb 9oz
Chris Proctor

CONGER EEL

■ **Shore:** 66lb 8oz
Andy Eke
■ **Boat:** 109lb 8oz
Roger Beer

DAB

■ **Shore:** 2lb 4oz 12dr
Jason Tucker
■ **Boat:** 1lb 15oz
Sean McCaffrey

FLOUNDER

■ **Shore:** 4lb 14oz 8dr
Paul Blehs
■ **Boat:** 5lb 3oz 14dr
Philip Dawson

DOVER SOLE

■ **Shore:** 5lb 5oz
Phil Troke
■ **Boat:** 4lb 6oz
M Le-Moignan

HALIBUT

■ **Boat:** 56lb 12oz
Peter Strickson

LEMON SOLE

■ **Boat:** 3lb 3oz
G Newcombe

MEGRIM

■ **Boat:** 2lb 14oz
Philip Lewis

PLAICE

■ **Shore:** 6lb 11oz
Martin Coates
■ **Boat:** 8lb 0oz 8dr
M Mowbray

LING

■ **Shore:** 18lb 11oz
Ross McKay
■ **Boat:** 88lb 6oz 8dr
G Laurenson

GOLDEN GREY MULLET

■ **Shore:** 3lb 8oz 8dr
D Woolcombe
■ **Boat:** 4lb 11oz
Stephan Martini

MULLET

■ **Shore:** 11lb 8oz
Glenn Lane
■ **Boat:** 11lb
Chris Harris

POLLACK

■ **Shore:** 18lb 4oz
Chris Griffin
■ **Boat:** 27lb 1oz
Barry James

BLONDE RAY

■ **Shore:** 31lb
Gary Tucker
■ **Boat:** 39lb 10oz
S Underwood

COMMON SKATE

■ **Shore:** 232lb
Lew Marsden
■ **Boat:** 249lb
Hans Dykman

CUCKOO RAY

■ **Shore:** 4lb 11oz
Kevin Hughes
■ **Boat:** 5lb 8oz
L Longmore

EAGLE RAY

■ **Shore:** 102lb
Ray Lewis

ELECTRIC RAY

■ **Boat:** 52lb
Chris Wood

MARBLED ELECTRIC

■ **Shore:** 11lb 1oz 5dr
Pierre Garrick
■ **Boat:** 21lb 7oz 12dr
David Bree

SMALL-EYED RAY

■ **Shore:** 17lb 8oz
M Robertson
■ **Boat:** 21lb
Dave Lynes

SPOTTED RAY

■ **Shore:** 7lb 14oz
Liam Warder
■ **Boat:** 8lb 4oz
Neil Buckett

STINGRAY

■ **Shore:** 75lb 4oz
Ed Spring
■ **Boat:** 69lb 8oz
John Styles

THORNBACK RAY

■ **Shore:** 22lb 11oz 10dr
Mike Johnson
■ **Boat:** 24lb 11oz
Gary Mewdell

UNDULATE RAY

■ **Shore:** 20lb 1oz
Steve Harder
■ **Boat:** 25lb 2oz
Scott Russell

ANGEL SHARK

■ **Boat:** 54lb
John Johnson

BLUE SHARK

■ **Boat:** 253lb
James Fellows

MAKO SHARK

■ **Shore:** 194lb 4oz
Andrew Griffith
■ **Boat:** 484lb 8oz
Chris Bett

PORBEAGLE SHARK

■ **Boat:** 350lb
Bob Smith

SMOOTHOUND

■ **Shore:** 28lb 10oz
Steve Cullen
■ **Boat:** 30lb
Trevor Knight

SPURDOG

■ **Shore:** 18lb 14oz
William Roche
■ **Boat:** 25lb 4oz
Shane Salmon

TOPE

■ **Shore:** 66lb 10oz
Michael Bell
■ **Boat:** 86lb
David Cook

BALLAN WRASSE

■ **Shore:** 9lb 4oz
Darren Swift
■ **Boat:** 9lb
Glen Carter

CUCKOO WRASSE

■ **Shore:** 1lb 13oz
Joe Edward
■ **Boat:** 2lb 4oz
D Glendenning

WHITE SKATE

■ **Boat:** 160lb
Pete Hammersley

* denotes catch and release

YOUNG RODS

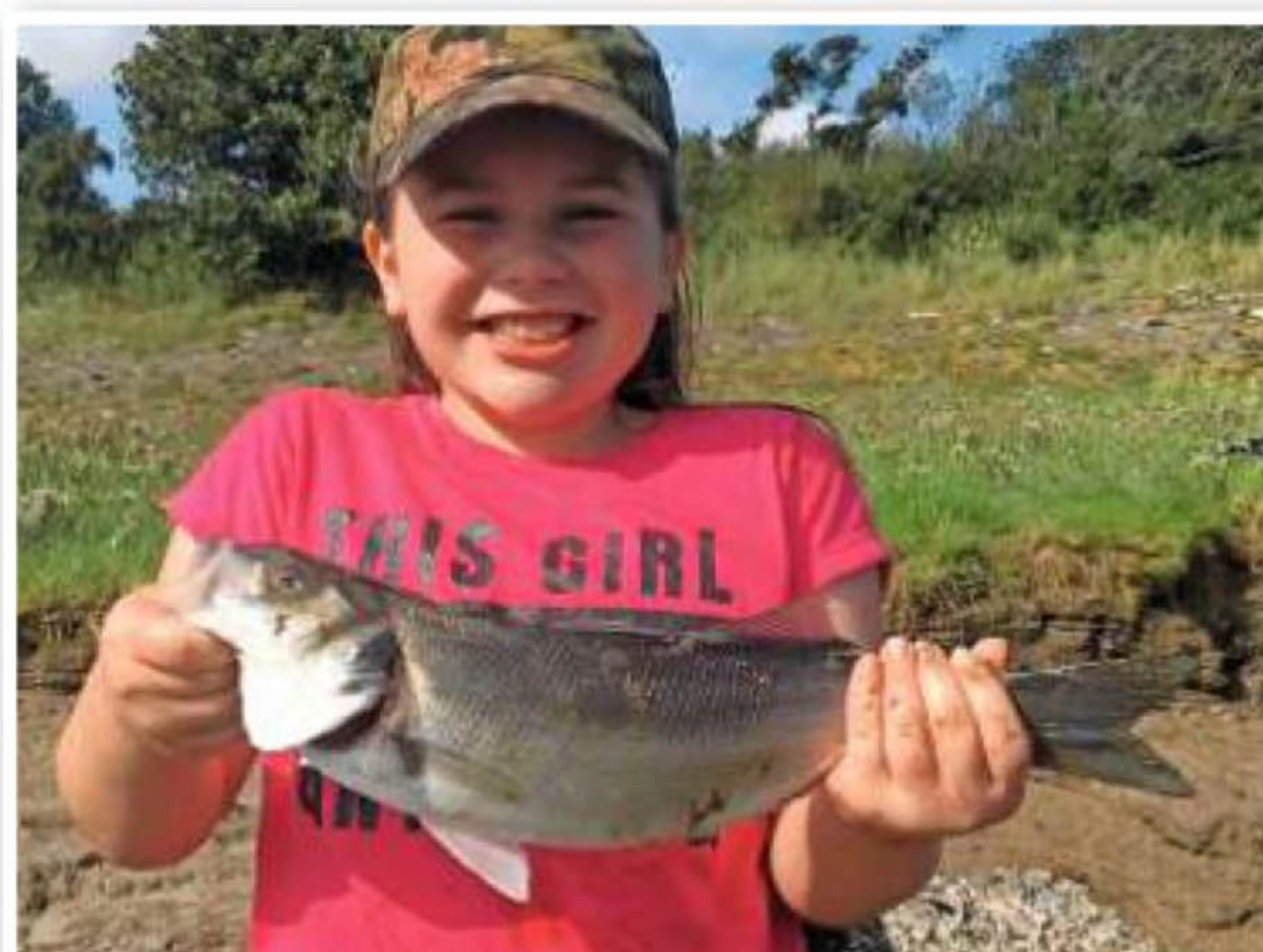
Sea Angler's celebration of the great angling achievements of its younger readers



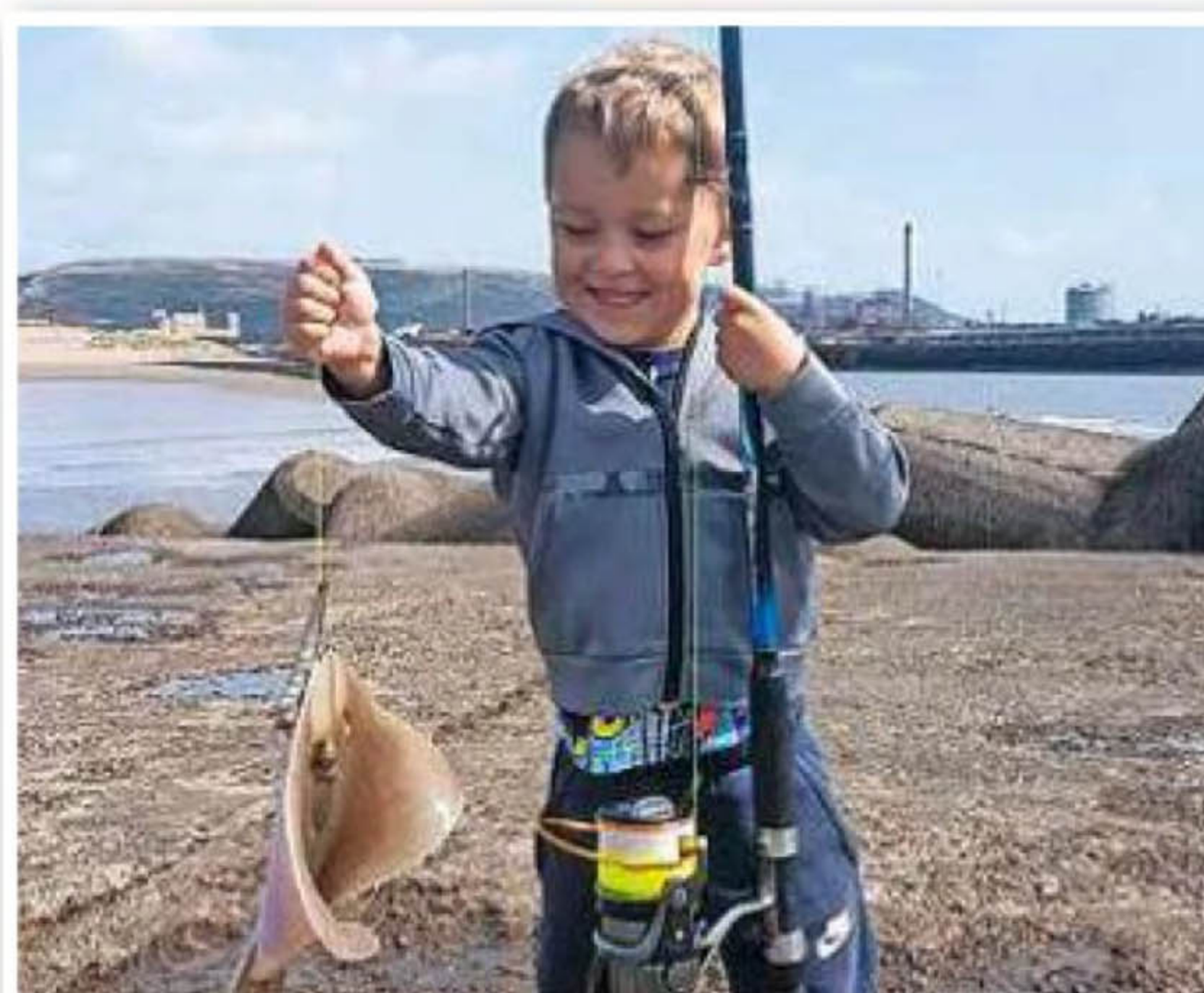
Bradley Woolard used a Pennell pulley rig loaded with black lug and squid to tempt this 9lb 11oz thornback ray. The 13-year-old, from Gravesend, Kent, was fishing from the beach at Leysdown.



Nine-year-old **Harry Wake**, from Middlesbrough, Cleveland, caught his first codling, weighing 4lb, when he took a trip aboard charter boat Three Sisters, skippered by Martin Hopkinson, out of Staithes, North Yorkshire.



Nine-year-old **Maisie Jane Preston**, from Morecambe, Lancashire, caught her first bass, while shore fishing from a mark in Cumbria. She used a two-hook flapper rig baited with lugworms.



Tommy Lee Larking, aged four, of Bridgend, caught this small thornback ray when he fished from the shore at the Jackstones, Port Talbot.



Jack Anderson, from Arbroath, caught this codling weighing 1lb 7oz when he presented mackerel baits on a two-hook flapper rig. The 10-year-old was fishing at a nearby cliff mark.



On his maiden shore fishing trip, **Henry Clements** caught this whiting when he fished from the seawall at Dymchurch, in Kent. The five-year-old who lives locally, presented lugworms on a three-hook flapper rig.



Hayden Cannon, from York, poses with his first ever fish, which he caught at Amlwch Harbour, on Anglesey, North Wales. The eight-year-old used LRF tackle and a ragworm bait to tempt this pollack that he returned.



Jack Reynolds, from Worle, in Somerset, caught a new personal best conger eel weighing 25lb 2oz. The 13-year-old used a live whiting for bait while aboard Heritage Charters, skippered by Tom Wright, who operates out of Watchet.

In association with



WIN A £25 TACKLE VOUCHER

Fishingmegastore.com awards a £25 voucher prize to each of two winners - the youngster with the best shore fish and another with the top boat catch. The winners can use the voucher to select tackle from **Fishingmegastore.com** which is based in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

■ **HOW TO ENTER:** We prefer digital photographs sent by email to SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk. Please include the details listed on the form (right). Prints can be sent by post with the form.



YOUNG RODS ENTRY FORM

First name: _____

Surname: _____

Age: _____

Daytime tel: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Type of fish: _____

Date caught: _____

Caught at: _____

Weight: _____

Bait: _____

Rig/tackle: _____

Shore ☐

Charter boat ☐

Private boat ☐

Boat name: _____

Skipper: _____

Port: _____

My fish was returned ☐

Not returned ☐

I enclose an SAE ☐

Post to...

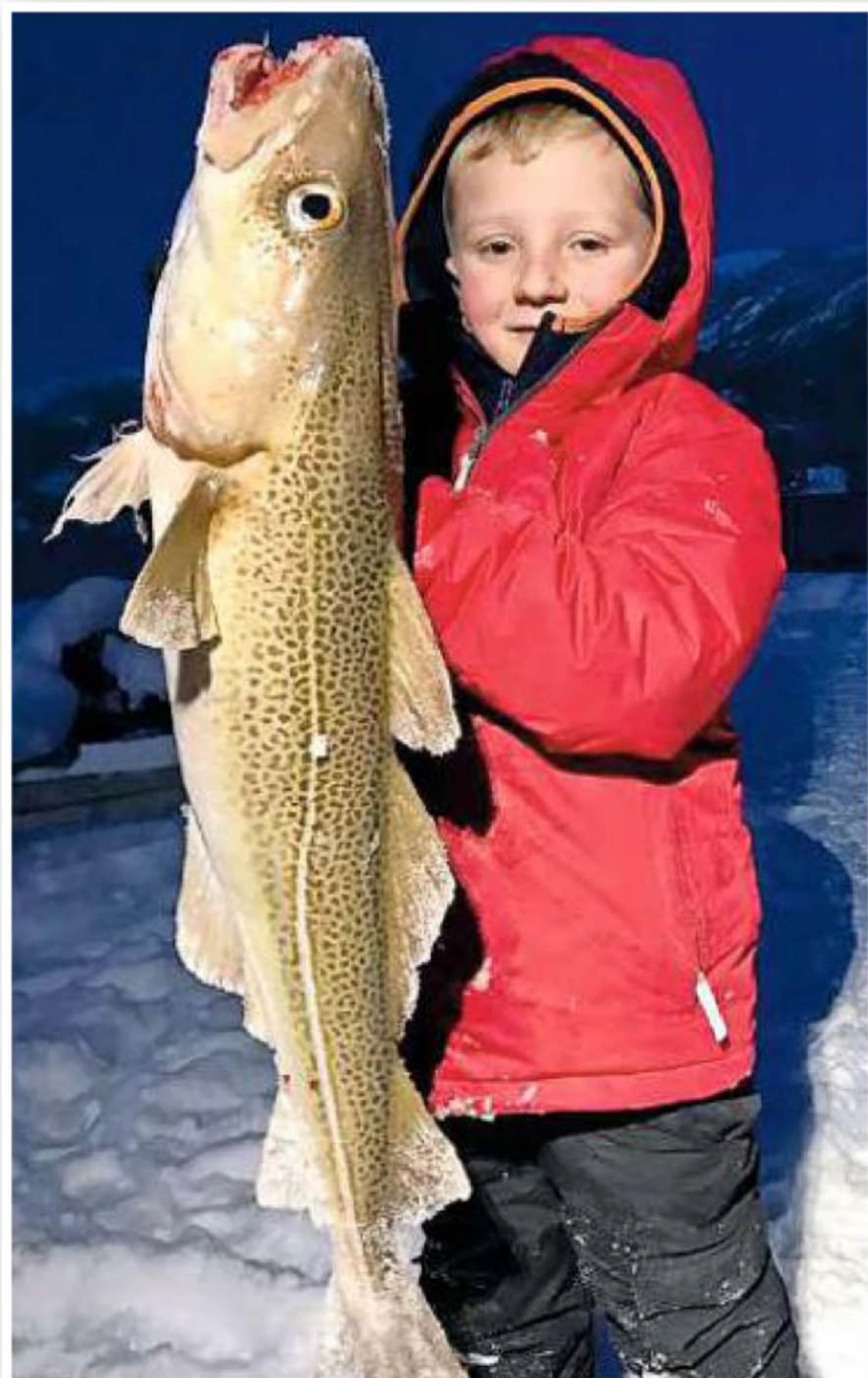
Young Rods, Sea Angler magazine, Bauer Media, Media House, Lynchwood, Peterborough PE2 6EA. I have the permission of my parent/guardian for my picture to be used by Sea Angler (tick box) ☐

Yes please, keep me up to date via email with the latest news and special offers from Sea Angler ☐

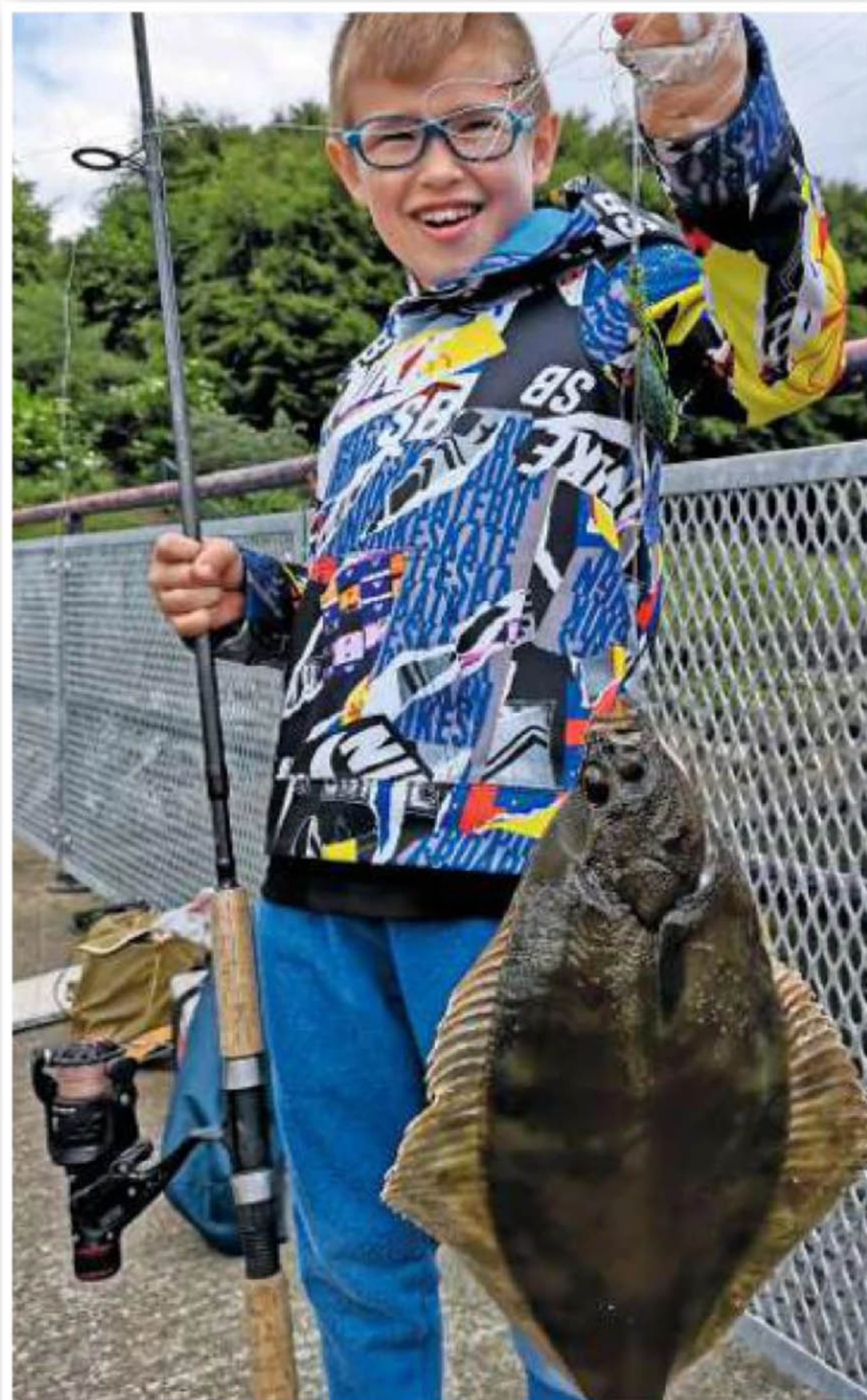
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Myles Hodgson went with his dad on a trip to Bodo, in Norway, to join up with the guys at Guided Fishing Norway's shore fishing camp. The seven-year-old, from Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, used a large chunk of herring to land his biggest cod, weighing 9lb.



Finlay Straker, aged nine, crossed over the border from his home in Edinburgh, to Northumberland. Using peeler crabs on a two-hook flapper rig, he landed this cracking flounder, weighing 2lb 4oz, at Sandy Bay.



Jack Lavis went to the Kingsbridge estuary, in Devon, hoping to catch a gilthead bream. Using a lug and crab bait, the 10-year-old caught his intended target, weighing 1lb 12oz, on his first cast.



Imogen Girt, from Chadwell St Mary, in Essex, caught this dogfish when she visited Deal pier, in Kent. The nine-year-old used ragworms for bait on a two-hook flapper rig and promptly returned the fish.

MY FISHING DIARY

ADVENTURES OF A JUNIOR SHORE ANGLER

Eight-year-old Harley Thompson, from Jarrow, Tyne & Wear, reveals how his latest shore trip went...

THE WEATHER and sea conditions were favourable, and it was looking promising for a session on one of my local rock marks. The northerly swells were calming down and there had been plenty of reports of cod being caught during the stir-up.

A venue I thought may offer me some success is a mark called The Wherry. It's a comfortable platform over rough ground and located in the small coastal village of Whitburn, which lies between Sunderland and South Shields. It's a popular mark that regularly produces decent cod when the conditions are right.

I arrived with my dad three hours before high water and we planned to fish over the top of the tide, before moving to another mark to fish when it began ebbing.

We both used large edible crab and mussel cocktails for bait, and right on high water my rod tip nodded down slowly. I picked it up to feel another strong pull indicating this fish was on.

I played it through the snags and pumped it out of the kelp, while my dad was ready to lift it up the short drop-off for me. As he started lifting my cod, he turned around with a look of frustration on his face. "Sorry, son, it's thrown the hook – and it looked a good 3lb too," he said. I was disappointed, but that's fishing, I suppose.

The light was now fading quickly, so we decided to move, stopping along the way for fish and chips.

We arrived at Bents Cottages, which is about a mile south of The Wherry. The fishing here is from rocks and you need to keep on your toes to follow the tide as it empties and uncovers gullies.

I lobbed my first cast only 40 yards out, and within minutes I had a really good bite, resulting in a sizable codling. I cast my next bait to the same place, tightened the mainline and held my rod, waiting for another bite. Again, I felt a really hard thump on the rod, and after a decent struggle through the snags, I eventually had a cracking codling weighing 3lb 8oz in my hands. I was happy with that, and to top it off, I'd beaten my dad...again!

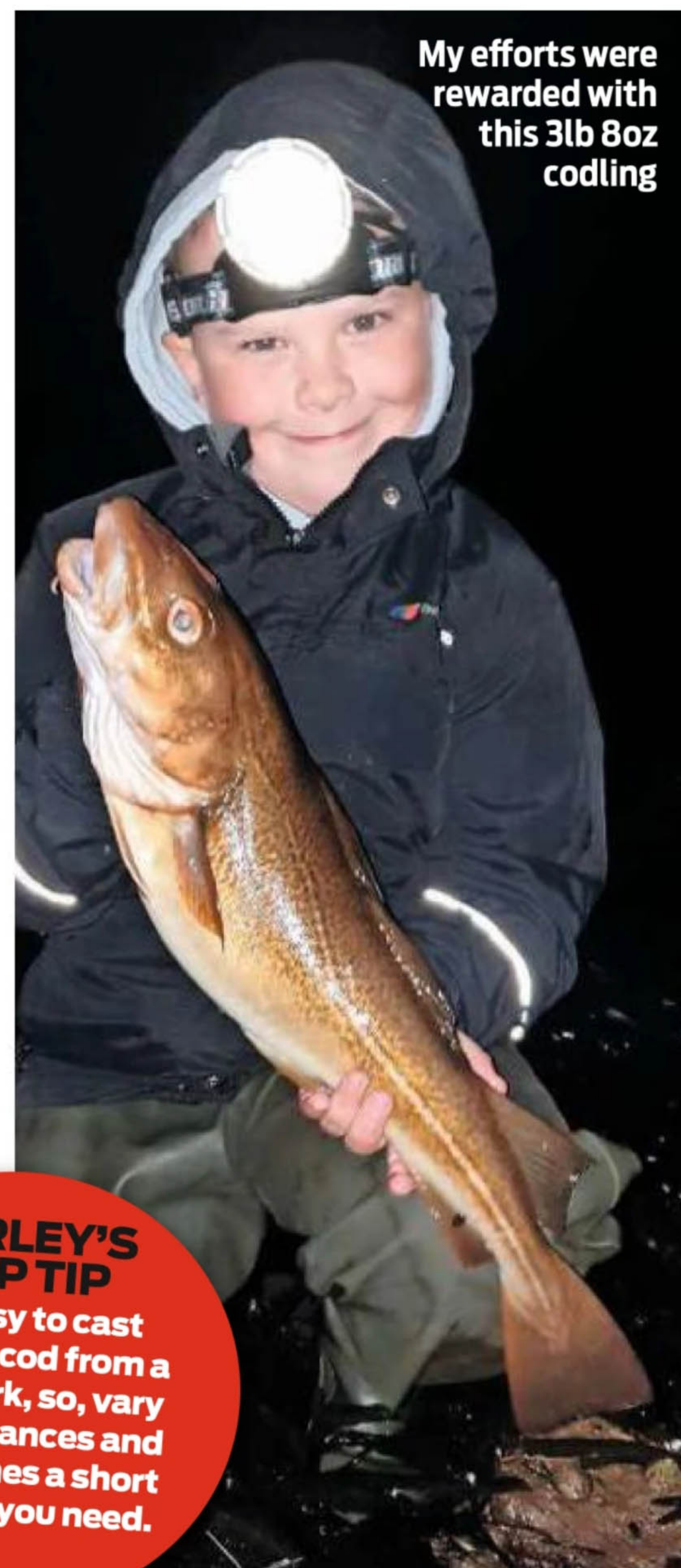
With the tide now starting to flood, we called it a night and headed for home with huge smiles on our faces. ■

Fishing at The Wherry at Whitburn in Tyne and Wear



Right: Preparing an edible crab and mussel cocktail

My efforts were rewarded with this 3lb 8oz codling



HARLEY'S TOP TIP

It's easy to cast over the cod from a rock mark, so, vary your distances and sometimes a short lob is all you need.

OUT THERE

Memorable moments from your latest sessions

Dragon Baits.

WIN A PACK OF DRAGON BAITS RAGWORMS

The best two pictures, selected by the Sea Angler team, will earn the sender 1lb of rag, worth £15 plus p&p, from farmed bait specialist Dragon Baits.

Please include your name and address when submitting your photograph to cliff.brown@bauermedia.co.uk.

The company supplies the trade, organisations, fishing clubs and individual anglers direct from its farm in South Wales. Contact Dragon Baits, tel: 01639 894111. Email: info@dragonbaits.co.uk Web: dragonbaits.co.uk

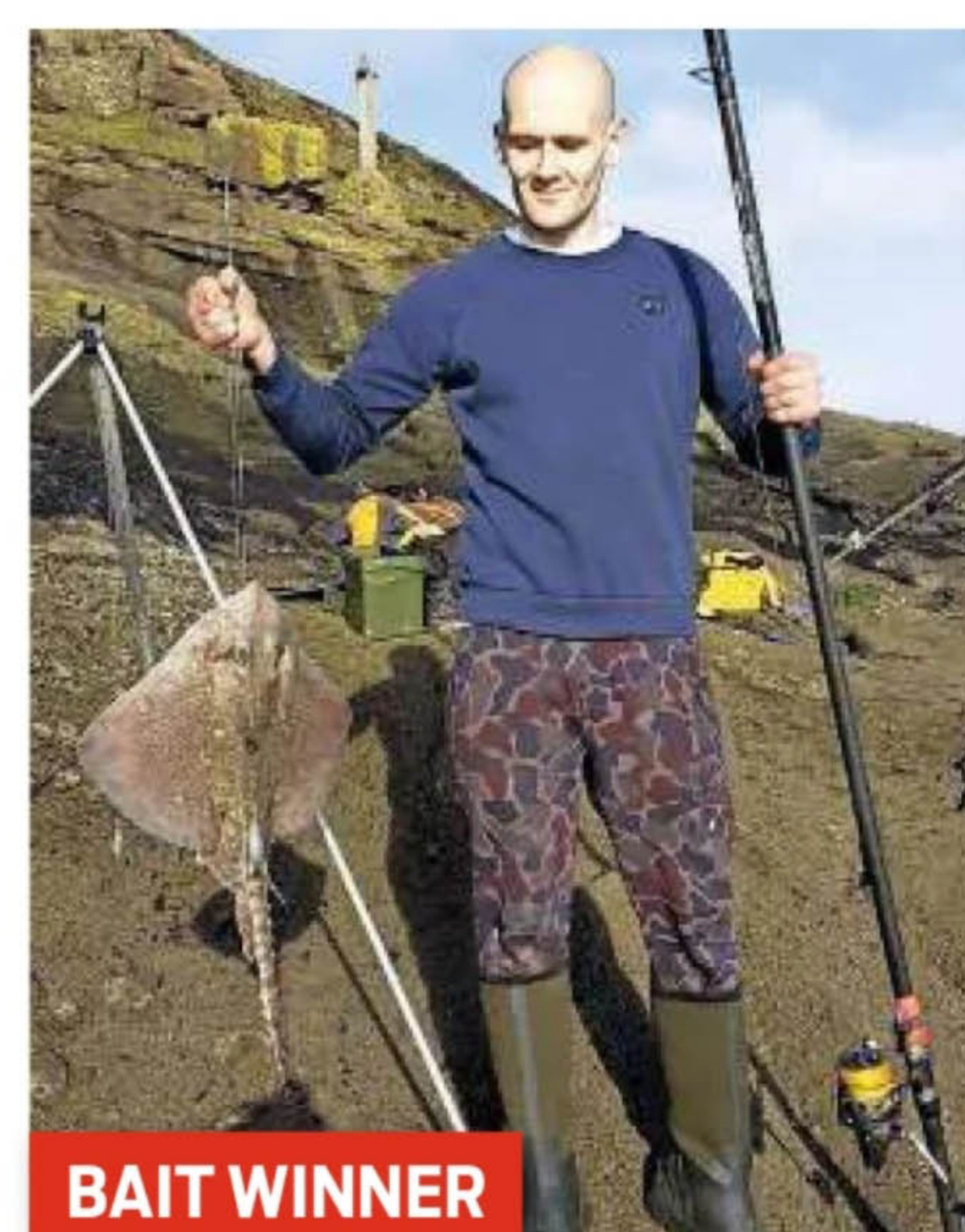


BAIT WINNER

TONS OF FUN: Gary Sinden and his 13-year-old daughter Gemma both caught 100lb-plus fish during a holiday in Cabo San Lucas in Mexico.

There was a best striped marlin of 180lb (pictured) for Gary, while Gemma caught one estimated at 120lb, along with a yellowfin tuna estimated at 100lb (pictured) and a 20lb dorado. They were fishing on Guerita III, skippered by Efen Beron. The marlin and tuna took trolled lures, while the dorado fell to a freelined livebait.

"Prior to this trip, Gemma's fishing experience was limited to catching small bass and eels in the harbour," said Gary, from Christchurch, Dorset. "I think for someone from the UK to catch a 100lb-plus fish is rare, let alone for a female, and only 13 years old, and now she has two species over the 100lb mark."



BAIT WINNER

FIRST RAY: On his ray fishing debut at Balcary Flat Rock, Dumfries and Galloway, Matthew Flaherty caught his first thornback. The angler, from Ashington, Northumberland, caught it on a Bluey bait on a pulley dropper rig. His pal Chris Hindmarsh caught six rays to 10lb.



PLAICE ACE: Seven-year-old Miley Smart achieved the bragging rights over her dad Alex, when they went fishing close to their home at Newhaven, East Sussex. They caught eight plaice on fresh lug, with Miley catching the biggest at 44cm, a centimetre bigger than her dad's best plaice. Miley made her own rigs and used a bait pump to collect her worms.



ON THE WAY: Members of the Cwmavon Outcasts club waded across a gulley to fish their match at the North Channel, in the Loughor Estuary. Match winner was 17-year-old Tom England, of Tonypandy, who was fishing his first competition.



WRECK & ROLL: Terry Hudson plays a 14lb pollack to the side of Ross Parham's charter boat Spot On, out of Brixham, Devon. The Brixham angler caught it at a mid-channel wreck on a Sidewinder Skerries Eel.



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Email your images to the editor:
SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk or
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YOUR LETTERS

Write to: Sea Angler Mailbox, Media House, Lynchwood Business Park, Peterborough PE2 6EA.
Email: SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk

☆ STAR LETTER ☆

ANIMOSITY TOWARDS ANGLERS

I have fished the Sussex coast for 40 years, including beach and inshore boat and kayak angling. Until last year, I'd had no bother because I don't fish busy summer beach spots in daylight or fish inconsiderately.

Now I've become concerned by some reactions to fishing. At dusk at West Wittering beach, with the tide up, with no other boats, boards or swimmers about, a man in a stubby kayak sat over my bait. I could see he would touch my line, so I called: "My line's out there mate". I wasn't aggressive or rude. His response: "So am I". Then he paddled into the line, not 20 yards out, grabbed the line and yanked it. I grabbed my rod to save it hitting the deck.

I wound in and asked: "What are you doing, I'm trying to fish here". His response: "Yeah, to kill a few fish".

With the light almost gone, the paddler came ashore further up the beach. I intercepted him walking back. "What was all that about? I was fishing. You could have broken my rod," I said. He replied: "You should be banned."

Recently, I planned a short midweek session at Bracklesham. I walked on to beach and spoke to some paddle boarders, who told me: "You can't fish here, mate, paddle board lessons today". I suggested I could move further along the beach. "We'll be going up and down all along here," he said.

They had no intention of giving me a bit of leeway to fish, so, to avoid a confrontation, I put my gear in the car and drove to Selsey. Having arrived at Selsey, I walked to the beach and put down my tackle box. A woman walked up, handed me a piece of line with a swivel attached, and said: "My dog had that in his mouth, you should take your rubbish home with you".

What is going on? I don't feel free to go beach fishing now, let alone collect bait. Animosity towards anglers seems to be on the rise. I can't be the only one noticing this. I'm not rude, love dogs, never leave litter, and I am always considerate.

John Burton, by email

DISCREDITED IS DISPUTED

I read your 'Welcome' in issue 579 and thought it was worth reminding you that at a 'sea angling working group', in April 2018, it was agreed that the National Water Sports survey is the most reliable source of participants – 769,729 total, 353,156 core, 416,573 occasional.

This is not very far away from the figures produced in the 'Sea Angling 2012' report, albeit one was England and the other UK.

Your company Bauer's own figures, from TGI research, show 329,000 people from Great Britain regularly go sea fishing, and 731,000 people from GB occasionally go sea fishing. In total 1,059,000 people from GB have been sea fishing in the last 12 months. Again, not far away from the higher end of the range produced in 'Sea Angling 2012'.

So, while the 'Sea Angling 2012' report might not be believed by some anglers, the results from it are remarkably similar to those from the National Water Sports survey and your company's research.

In the end a compromise was reached by those businesses present (including Bauer) to agree on the National Water Sports data. I don't think that 'Sea Angling 2012' has been discredited. The other sources of evidence are all in the same ballpark. The only ones who seem to think it is discredited are the ones who simply refuse to believe it – no matter what the evidence says.

David Mitchell, Head of Marine, The Angling Trust

■ **The editor says:** You disagree with one word 'discredited' that I used to describe 'Sea Angling 2012', yet admit it is not

believed by some anglers. My 'Welcome' dealt with the bass bag limit increase, but you ignore the fact that I congratulated the Angling Trust and BASS for their parts in getting the bass bag limit increased.

THE FISHING EXPERIENCE

Some people are lucky as children, their dad or mum take them fishing at a young age and not only share their experiences, but pass on their knowledge. For others the road is more tortuous.

Although a very kind neighbour took me night fishing as a child and I had bits and bobs in my tackle box, he didn't really sell it to me. Fast-forward many years and now I have finally experienced the love of sea angling, particularly boat fishing.

Everyone who has this passion will know that there are some really special things you must have in your tackle box. You know, those things that sparkle and that you can't do without. In reality, some never really leave the tackle box, but you love them none the less.

Experiencing the sport later in life, I have tried to catapult myself into the mix, and one of the best things in fishing is the local tackle shop, or better still the staff. I live in Plymouth and there are a number of really good sea fishing shops, but I really like Sea View Angling on Faraday Road. The guy never pressures me, he often shares his knowledge, but never leaves me feeling less than another shipmate.

Every time I leave his shop, he draws another rig on the back of a paper bag or reveals another venue to visit. Every time, his little briefing notes bring results. I invite everyone to embrace their local fishing shop, squeeze out the odd piece of wisdom and treat yourself to some tackle.

Geoffrey Farmiloe, Plymouth, Devon

USE IT OR LOSE IT

I live in a coastal town in Cumbria with a strong sea angling tradition, and in the last three years we've lost two angling shops. It's a worrying trend.

For a town with three sea angling clubs, it's an issue, with the nearest shop now being 10 miles away. While that is not a long way for some, I see it as a blow. Local shops were handy to go to and have a chat, get some advice or get a feel of things before purchasing.

While I take some responsibility, like many anglers, for purchasing from the internet for convenience or an item being cheaper, the long-term consequences will be felt as people give up fishing and don't have anywhere to find out what's being caught. Not everyone reads Sea Angler, or uses the internet, but the slow decline will have a knock-on effect for the next generation of anglers. Be thankful if you have a local shop. Use it or lose it.

Mike Amos, Workington, Cumbria

PROMOTE THE FUTURE

I'm 15, and as far as I can remember I've fished at my father's side. It has given us



a marvellous bond. I've learnt a lot, about not just fishing, but the natural world and life in general. That's why we need more people my age on the beach or boat.

Fishing is good for the mind, body and soul. It builds bonds between family and friends, mankind and nature, and, of course, fish and fisherman. I think that fishing could help heal many of the problems that we face today. Nothing puts a human more at ease than being in our natural habitat.

Just like the fry is the future of fish species, the juniors are the future of our sport. We must all do our best to preserve, improve and grow the greatest and most ancient sport on Earth.

George Johnson,
Horsham, West Sussex

FOLLOW HANDLING ADVICE

I watch some amazing catches on YouTube, but was disheartened to see the catch and release of a 27lb blonde ray.

Disheartened not because of the fish or the angler's ability, but why is it acceptable to weigh the fish by hanging it from its mouth or hold it by the soft tissue around its head? All anglers should follow the Shark Trust's advice on how to handle sharks and rays.

Stu Davies, by email



ENCOURAGE OTHERS

I liked your article on the Shark Trust and poster about handling sharks and rays in issue 576. All types of media should only use photographs where the angler is holding the fish in the correct manner.

Matthew Day, by email

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

Two articles caught my attention in issue 577. First the one by Babs Kiljewski, and the second by Dave Lewis. I know Dave has written about Costa Rica before, but always about the Pacific coast. Obviously, these were excellent articles and would whet any angler's appetite to visit.

You never seem to feature the Caribbean coast, which I have been fishing fairly regularly for more than 20 years. It's true the east coast does not have the huge variety of species compared to the Pacific side. What it does offer is the consistency of the tarpon fishing at Barra Del Colorado on the mouth of the Rio Colorado and the snook fishing in the lagoons and beaches.

I have never visited without catching, and if any readers have a desire to catch one of the finest game fish available, this is the place to go.

Patrick Hillard, King's Lynn, Norfolk

SHARE THE EXPERTISE

The article on the two skippers from Ireland and Wales meeting in the middle of the Irish Sea (issue 578) made me long for the summer.

As I own a small boat on the County Down coast, the Irish Sea is where I spend many an hour hoping for the big one. I often think about targeting these deep-water wrecks, but find it almost impossible to imagine doing it.

I would find it helpful if the skippers would share a few tips with small-boat owners on how to go about such a task. For example, tide state or getting that correct drift.

Luke Turkington, County Down

CONSIDER THE FORMULA

In the lure questions and answers in issue 577, Jonathan Parkinson states: "Surely casting 30g and 40g lures on 20lb braid is a recipe for breakages?"

Henry Gilbey replied there was no problem even with 18lb line. Has he not heard of the power casting formula of 10lb of line for every 1oz (30.25g) of lead being cast? That means that 20lb line can take 2oz (60.5g) and 18lb line 1.8oz (54.45g).

Dr John A O'Connor, Pembrokeshire

Henry Gilbey says: I believe 30g and 40g lures and heavier are just fine on a good 20lb braid.

BASS BAG DILEMMA

Two bass a day sounds great, but just like an old school trout fishery, it's catch your bag and go home and less excuse to keep fishing. Two is enough for family dinner. However, you could move and/or change your target species.

Another point (or maybe a more serious issue) is sharing a catch among a group or on a boat. Say there are six crew plus the skipper, what is the legal position on boating 12 fish plus two for skipper? A bigger charter boat could take a lot of fish. A serious issue, but no one has addressed it. Would we rather not have an answer?

Malcolm Hayward, by email

HELPING HAND

The Yorkshire Federation of Sea Anglers has seen an upsurge in people wanting to fish our matches, several after seeing the events listed in Sea Angler.

Some of the newcomers are not as experienced as others, while some fished many moons ago and have decided to start again. Hopefully, I'll persuade some of the local top anglers to give up a morning to show them all the basics.

Keith Mumby, Yorkshire FSA

WONDERFUL 'LEAKYBOOTS'

Loved the piece by James 'Leakyboots' Batty about catching bass (issue 577). Informative, humorous and so good I read it twice.

Nigel Duncan, Edinburgh

The editor says: You can read more from 'Leakyboots' on page 18.

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Asso Lines are a huge range of well-known products produced by Gruppo DP, one of the biggest monofilament companies in the world.

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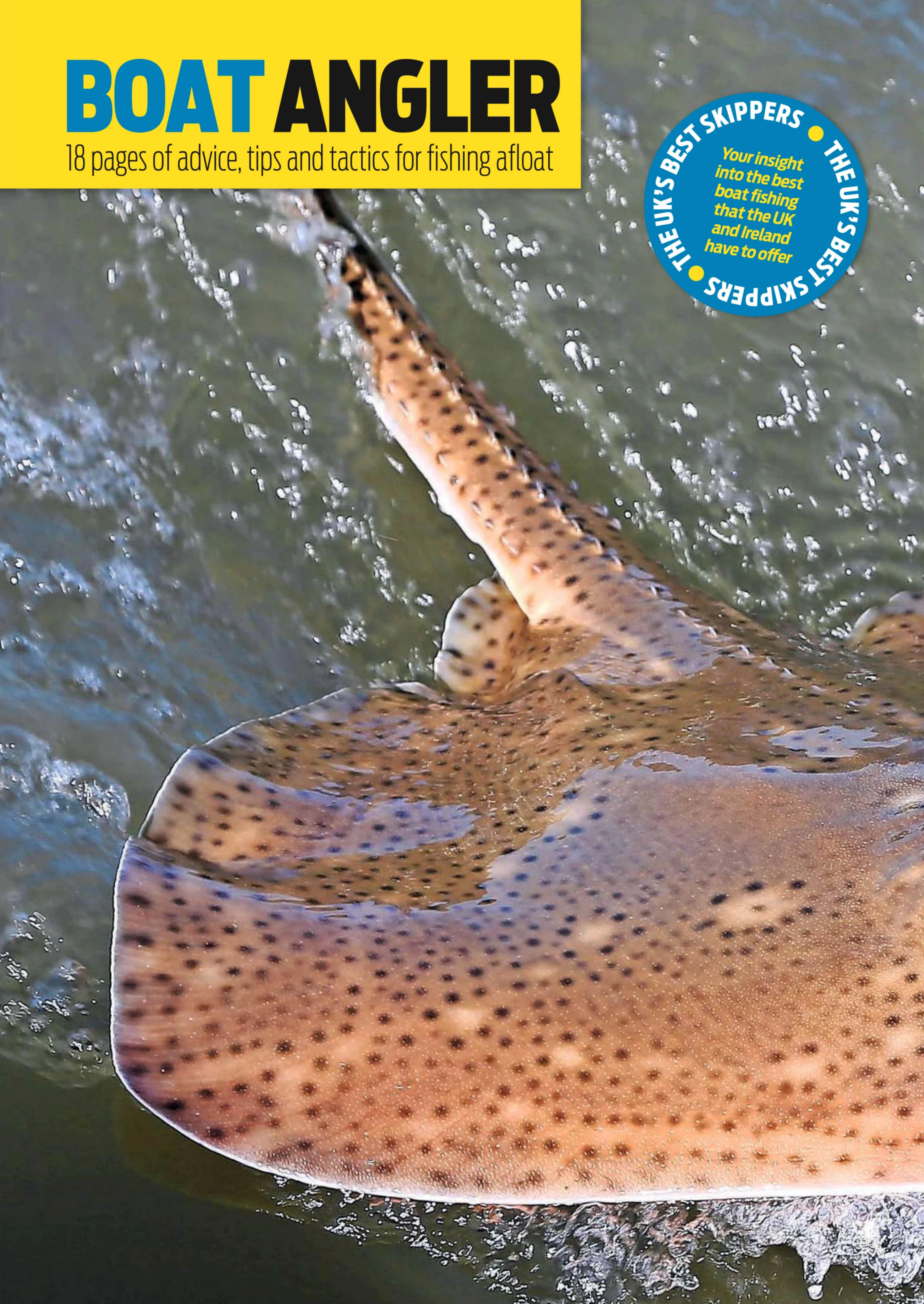
■ **ULTRA** – rated by many top match anglers as the best line available. Eight breaking strains. RRP: £15.99 for a 4oz spool.

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BOAT ANGLER

18 pages of advice, tips and tactics for fishing afloat





Words and
photography by
DAVE ROBERTS

What will you catch in spring?

Sample the variety of fish on offer in the Bristol Channel

TO SOME, THE IMAGE OF THE Bristol Channel is nothing more than a troublesome length of fast-flowing mud, and in some areas they would be correct.

Having spent the past 30 or more years chartering here,

I consider myself qualified to make an attempt to dispel this theory.

By carefully selecting your tides, target species and skippers, you could be pleasantly surprised by what the seasons have to offer.

I know it is still early in the year, and

we should still be pulling out all the stops in an effort to bag that elusive 30lb cod before she disappears over the horizon for another season. Indeed, many of us are, but it will do no harm for us to take stock of what we have to look forward to in the Bristol Channel. ▶





Smoothounds appear from late spring

SERIOUS TARGET

It will soon be time for us to change tactics and target one or two of our spring visitors. As the days draw out and the weather hopefully begins to settle into a friendlier pattern, we will start to plan our assault on our first serious target – rays.

Our most common species of ray has to be the thornback, which is caught almost any time of year, although it's in the spring that these fish are in their prime. Fish to the better part of 20lb are not uncommon, with bags of more than 50 fish reported each season.

Strangely, it's in the dirty waters that this species seems to thrive best of all. The shallow, muddy grounds to the east of the Bristol Channel usually produce the best results, although thornbacks can turn up just about anywhere.

On the shallow patches, my favourite tactics invariably involve uptide casting. A rod with a casting rating in the region of 4-6oz and a suitable reel, either fixed spool or multiplier, is ideal. For terminal gear you won't go far wrong with a simple running leger arrangement with a 3-4ft length of 50lb mono with a size 4/0 to 6/0 hook.

The species can be taken on a variety of baits, but the most consistent is a fillet of fresh mackerel, herring or Bluey. This can be tipped with a strip or even a head of fresh calamari. Bites may be slight, and though it pays to allow a little time, too much waiting will enable the fish to take the hook down deeply. The fish might also wrap the trace around its tail, making retrieving it very difficult, especially if there is a lot of tide running.

On landing your thornback, let the skipper do the unhooking because the fish will more than likely be armed with a fair selection of sharp thorns, which can inflict a nasty injury to the unsuspecting. If the thorns don't get you, beware of those crustacean-crunching jaws

Next on the list of spring visitors, and one of my own personal favourites, has to be the small-eyed ray. It differs from its cousin the thornback

in many ways, and should not be considered as just another skate.

The small-eyed prefers the cleaner, sandier areas where its favourite food, the sandeel, may be found. Of the many vast sandbanks littered across the whole of the Bristol Channel, there can't be many which will not produce a small-eyed or two.

Again, uptiding tactics will do the trick, though the sandeel will always outperform any other bait choices. Small-eyes to specimen weight are regularly taken by charter boat anglers on both sides of the Channel, so all you have to do is select your port and skipper.

Once your small-eyed is hooked, you may be forgiven for not recognising it as being a ray. Its spirited dives and runs belie its family reputation of being poor fighters.

The Channel also holds good numbers of the mighty blonde ray, along with spotted and the occasional cuckoo. Maybe we'll take a closer look at these fish another time.

HUNGRY SMOOTHHOUNDS

As the springtime runs into early summer, we change tactics slightly when our target species will become the smoothhound.

Many specimen-sized fish are landed in the Bristol Channel, with individuals regularly reported to well over the magical 20lb mark.

As with the rays, the hounds can best be taken on uptide gear, though a light boat rod and reel loaded with good-quality braid will give you a fight to remember. A peeler crab is traditionally the number one bait for the hungry hounds, but don't discount the old calamari or a fresh hardback crab. A whole squid will often out-fish crabs in my part of the Channel, especially for the larger fish.

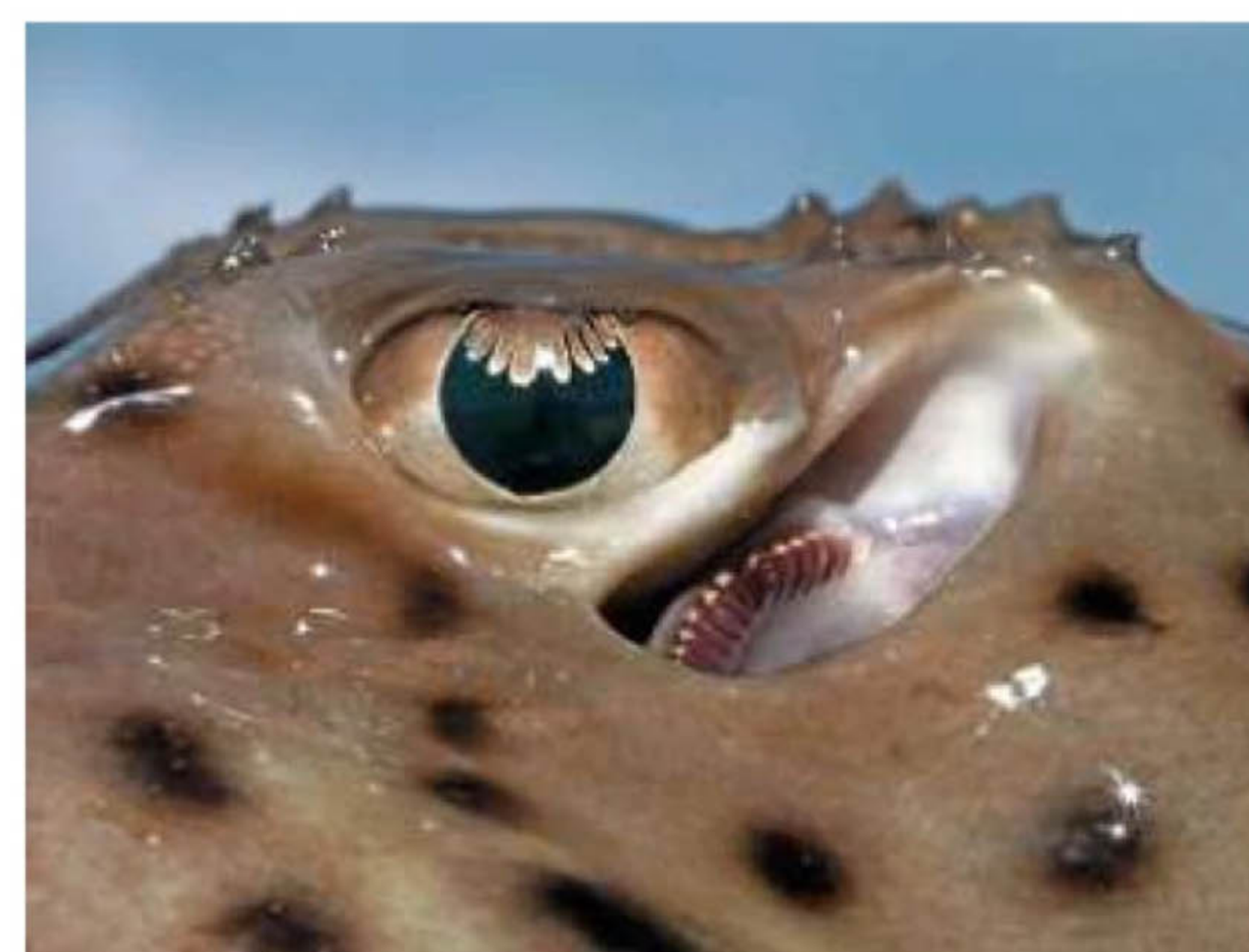
The trick with both crab and squid is to wrap it on the hook with elastic cotton. This holds the bait firmly on the shank of the hook, preventing the point and barb becoming masked. This is very important with a fast, bait-snatching fish such as the hound. ■



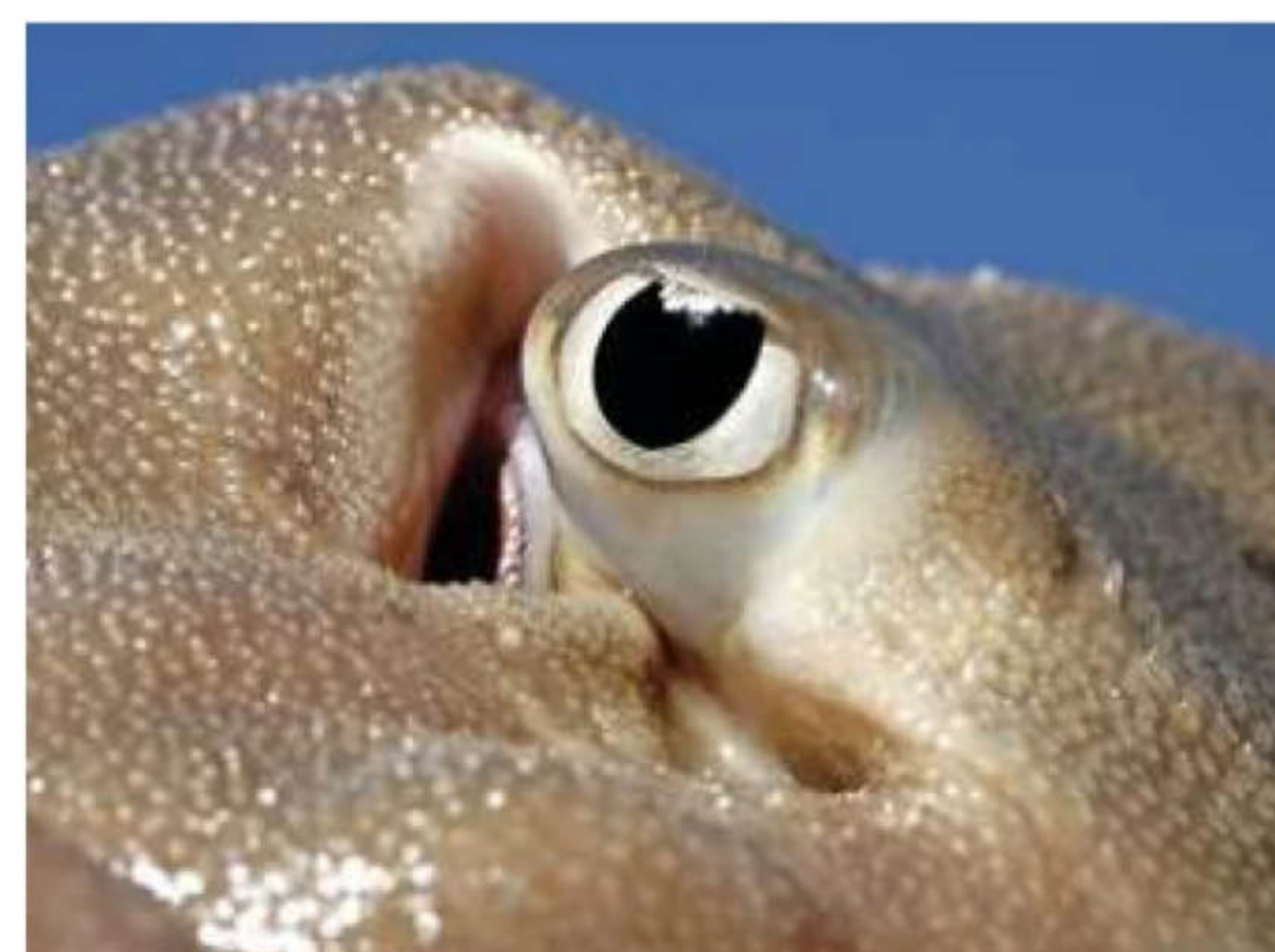
Secure a squid and sandeel mix with bait elastic to prevent the hook being masked



Expect a good battle with a small-eyed ray



The Channel holds lots of spotted rays



The small-eyed ray prefers sandy ground

NEED TO KNOW

■ Dave Roberts is the skipper of the charter boat AlyKat, out of Minehead, Somerset. To book a trip, tel: 01643 703892 or 07764 150648.

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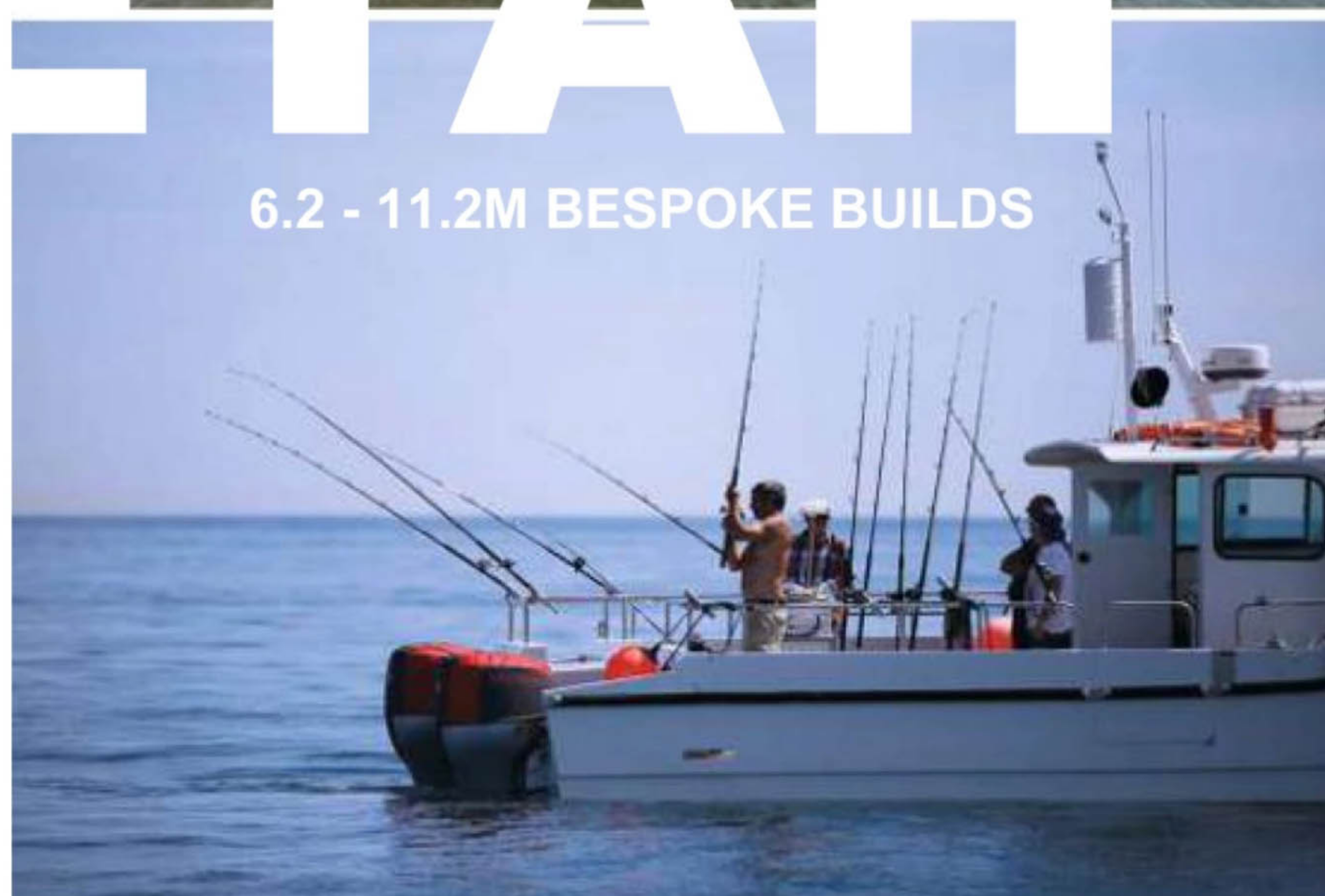


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Dorset's delights

Here's a head start towards your next red-letter day on the banks or wrecks

SPRING DOWN IN DORSET IS MY favourite time of year to go fishing. After a couple of months of fishing for cod and whiting in Poole Bay, it feels good to venture farther afield to enjoy some variety in the English Channel.

Having skippered charter boats from Poole for 12 years, it is interesting to look back at some of my old trip logbooks to review how the fishing has changed or progressed over the intervening period. One of the big changes is the resurgence of the spurdog population. Only seven or eight years ago we used to get perhaps half-a-dozen spurs a season, but for the last four seasons we have averaged around 100.

I'm not a scientist, so I can't tell you why these stocks have risen in the English Channel, but I can see a change of mindset among most recreational anglers. Gone are the days where nothing was put back and no thought was given to what would be caught in the future. It is nice to see so many anglers keen to release their target species. This modern mentality can only mean good things for recreational fishing stocks.

Another local change has been the arrival of large tope as early as January. In the last couple

of trips while writing this I have landed four tope in two days, and all of them weighed more than 30lb. You never used to see a tope off Poole before May, so this is something new.

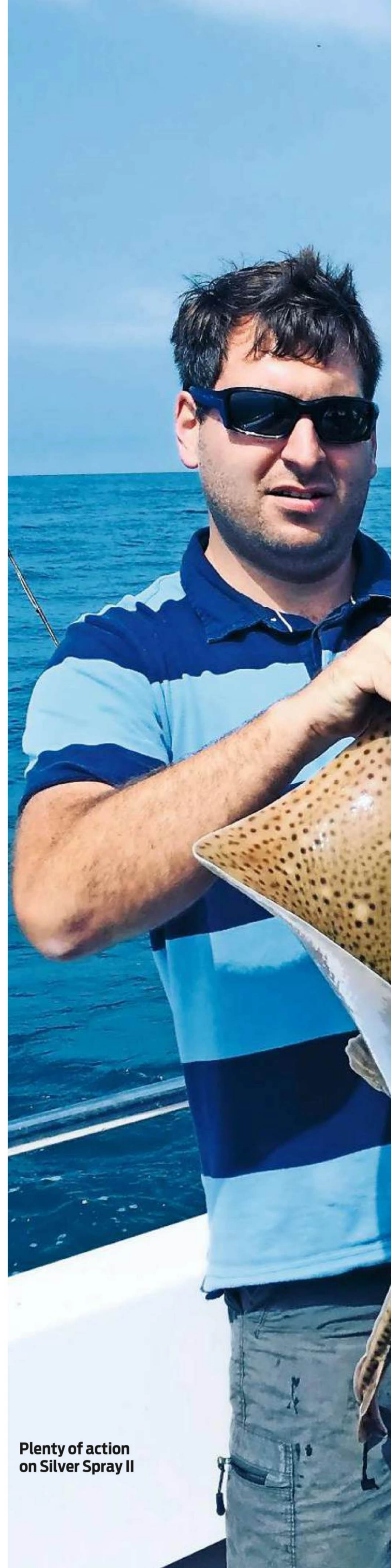
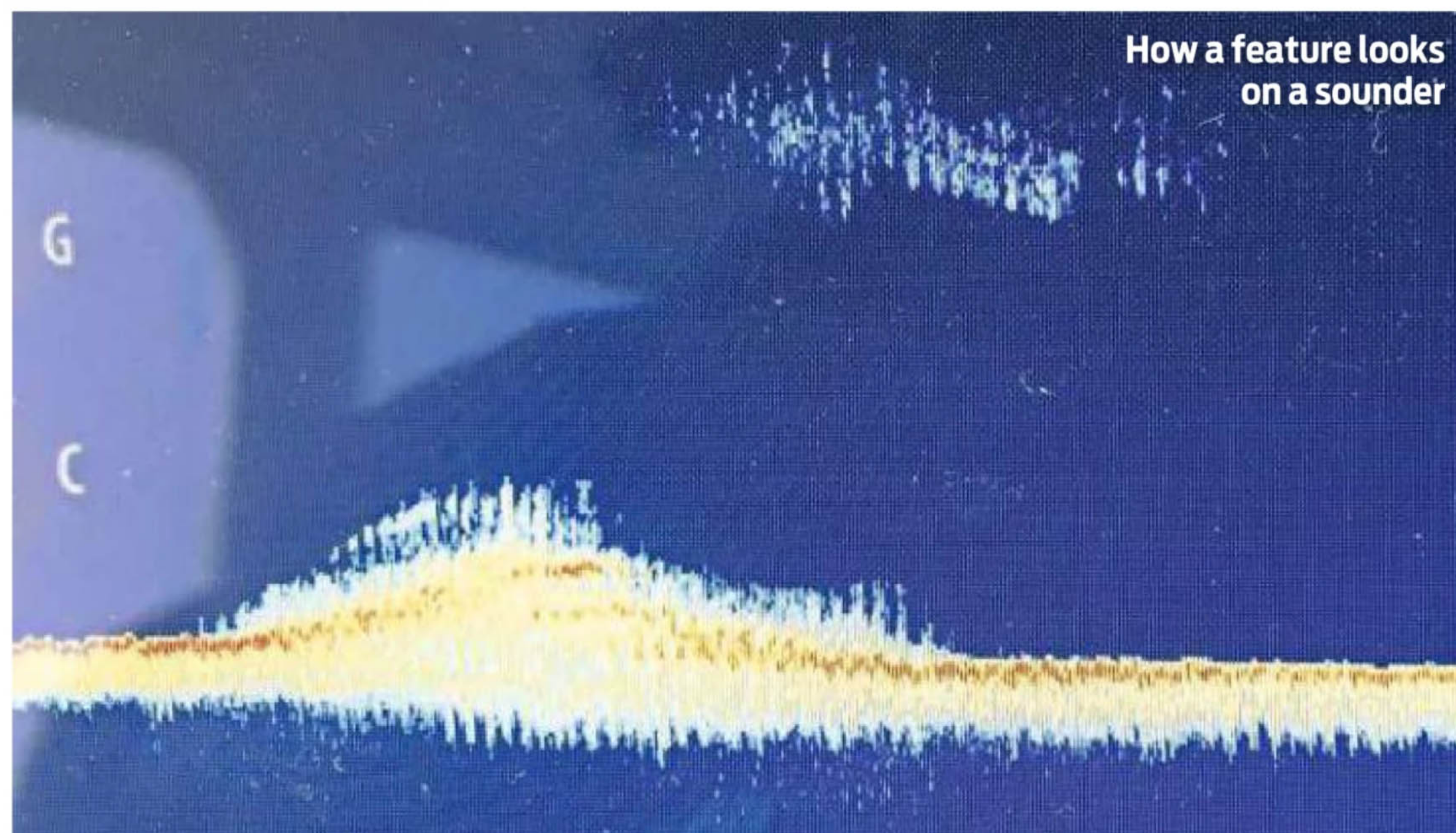
It's a great bonus species to have around, but it requires heavy mono on your traces. I used to say 100lb trace line was enough, but with these big toothy critters swimming around, 150lb is essential to prevent rigs being bitten off. There isn't any benefit to going light when fishing offshore because even spurdogs bite through 60lb or 80lb mono quite frequently.

ANCHORING THE BANKS

When choosing where to fish on these spring days at anchor, it's important to look at the type of ground. A chart plotter gives me a general idea – for example, 'M' would be mud, 'R' for rock, 'S' for sand, 'Sh' for shingle.

From my experience, areas with mud usually produce more conger eels, whiting and maybe a few undulate and thornback rays. Areas of rock and harder ground can produce some good days on the spurs, but you can get a lot of bull huss, pouting and, again, congers.

My go-to is usually a bank or feature made up of stones and shingle. Here I can expect ►



Plenty of action on Silver Spray II



blonde rays, plenty of spurdogs and a good mix of bull huss, whiting, smoothhounds, pollack and lately the big tope.

There is no substitute for throwing down the anchor, putting some bait down and seeing what's there. There are at least a few fish to be caught everywhere, and it's my job to figure out what they are and how to catch them. As a keen angler, the constant chase of the fish and finding another great mark that might make the next red-letter day are what keep me hungry and why I love my job as a charter skipper.

Of course, any boat owner can improve their spring fishing by looking out for potential marks when steaming offshore in summer. Therefore, always keep an eye on your sounder for any features that could hold fish in spring.

MAKE THE RIG

It can sometimes be hard to pick the correct rig when you have the chance of connecting with several different species on the banks.

Some fish, like the rays, huss and smoothhounds, prefer the bait flat on the bottom, while others, such as the whiting, like a bait presented a foot or two above. Spurdogs like to take a hook presented off the bottom, even during the full flow of tide.

A one-up, one-down rig is an ideal way of targeting all those species at once. You need two size 2 rolling swivels, a zip slider, 100lb minimum mono for the trace, a size 4/0 circle hook and size 6/0 circle hook, a four-inch fluorescent muppet and four small plastic beads.

Making it is simple. Cut 4ft of mono and attach a swivel to one end. Keeping the swivel end on your right, make a large loop about the size of a grapefruit and pinch it at the top where

the line crosses itself. Wrap the swivel around the line five times, being sure not to tighten the loop as you go. Open the centre of the twist slightly and pass the bottom of the loop through and then hold it in your teeth or hook it over something, such as a rod holder or door handle.

Now pull it tight – the important bit to maintain even pressure, using one hand on either side of the twist. Pull your hands away from each other; a small amount of tension will be enough to keep the loop from disappearing.

Once you have a tight knot, cut one end of the loop within 5mm of the main knot. This should give you a dropper that will fish above the bottom.

Slide the muppet up the dropper followed by the four beads and then tie on the size 4/0 hook. The beads separate the muppet from the circle hook, which stops it covering the hook and preventing it from setting. On the open end of the trace, thread on your zip slider and then attach the second swivel. Finally, it's a case of tying a simple flowing trace about 4ft to 5ft long on this bottom swivel, and finishing it off with the size 6/0 hook.

BEST BAIT

The fish are not particularly fussy about your choice of bait, but any combination, including mackerel, sandeel, squid and garfish, will work.



More important is bait presentation, especially when using the two-hook rig. One of the most common mistakes is to hook the baits through four or five times and bunch them around the hook, which causes the bait to spin and often ends in a tangle and a wasted drop.

It is better to hook the bait once through one end, leaving the main bulk of it below the hook so it is streamlined in the tide. If you are wondering what your bait will look like once it has reached the bottom, take a second while it rests in the tide on the surface and see if it spins.

WRECK FISHING

If you're not a fan of fishing at anchor using the big lead weights and a large bait, then another option on a spring day is wreck fishing. Out of Poole, the main target species will be pollack.

As the inshore waters get to their coldest and sport goes quiet, out in the Channel the fishing is getting going with the arrival of the sprat shoals above the many wrecks.

When fishing on the drift, I like to keep my rig simple and use a zip slider for my 100z lead weight and a flowing trace around 8ft long with

IT'S SIMPLE TO MAKE A ONE-UP, ONE-DOWN RIG...

1

Attach a swivel. Make a large loop and pinch it at the top where the line crosses itself. Wrap the swivel around the line five times

2

Open the centre of the twist slightly and pass the bottom of the loop through

3

Tighten knot, before cutting one end of the loop within 5mm of the main knot

4

Slide muppet up dropper followed by four beads. Then tie on a size 4/0 hook

5

Thread on zip slider and attach second swivel. Then tie a flowing trace of about 4-5ft on this bottom swivel and tie on a size 6/0 hook



my chosen lure on the end.

If you are on a boat with plenty of room, or if the wind is perfect (wind going with the drift rather than against or across it) then you can lengthen the traces to about 15ft. This may seem excessive, but it will give you even more of a natural-looking movement as you work your lure up and down over the wreck.

RETRIEVE RATIO

The other factor that can affect your catch rate is the retrieve ratio on your reel. You need to be able to give the lure the correct amount of movement through the water to attract the predatory pollack. Some reels are better suited to fishing at anchor in some tide and have a slower retrieve. Your best choice is a reel with a retrieve of 6:1 or more, which means you will be gaining roughly 2ft of line per turn on your reel.

The point in the tide where the fish feed may change from day to day, so don't be too anxious to move wrecks after a couple of blank drifts. I have good days where most of the fish come around the dropping tide and slack water, and days where the peak flow of the tide is best. I guess it depends on what the baitfish are doing and how they have shoaled.

Looking for the larger fish doesn't always require the biggest lures. It depends on what food source is around for the pollack and then

it's up to you to pick the best lure to imitate that food. Start off your day with a six-inch lure, but if that doesn't do the job, then try either three or four-inch lures to get results. I work the smaller lures slightly more slowly to give the fish a better chance of spotting them. ■

NEED TO KNOW

■ Sam Cumming is the skipper of Silver Spray II, out of Poole, Dorset, tel: 07787 375386.



Skipper Sam with a spurdog



A 29lb 8oz blonde ray for Darryl Morrell



Humber

A trip on a new charter boat proves the Humber is

WHEN I HEARD THERE WAS a new charter boat operating out of Grimsby, I was quick to get on the phone and book a trip because it had been a few years since I have fished the River Humber.

Joining me were my mates Jim Midgley, Roger Cooling and Roger 'Delboy' Tipple. We'd followed the 'Charter Boat Elysse' Facebook page and it seemed that we could be in for a real treat, with lots of cod gracing the deck. We couldn't wait to get afloat.

We arrived at the boat and met skipper Chris Fyson, who welcomed us with a cup of coffee and a quick safety briefing.

Soon we were heading upriver at 20 knots. It took 10 minutes to get to our first fishing spot, and, as Chris dropped the anchor, we were getting rigged up and trying to defrost our frozen black lug and squid (note to self for future trips – get the bait out the night before!).

My battle plan was to fish a lug and squid cocktail on one rod while sitting it out with a whiting livebait on the other. I quite often do this in winter, and it has accounted for some nice cod over the years. It took a matter of

minutes for the fish to come on the feed, with cod being hoisted over the side from all four corners of the deck.

The action continued steadily throughout the morning, with the largest cod weighing 9lb 8oz and the rest around the 4-5lb bracket. There were a few smaller codling and these were returned. With the quality of cod being caught, there really was no point in keeping the smaller ones, although they were all perfectly sizeable.

As the tide began to die away I'd not had a sniff on my whiting livebait, so I decided to reel it in and fish a whole squid when the tide picked up again. We were still catching occasional cod



A nice-looking
9lb 8oz cod
for Andy
Waltham

**BOAT
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fishing well for cod...and there's a bonus bass too!

during slack water, but the whiting and dabs had come on the feed. It was a rattle-a-chuck, with some good 'tings' coming in – the largest I'd guess at a little under 2lb.

SPECIAL GUEST

Once the tide got going again it took about half an hour for the cod to come back on the feed. When one of the lads on the stern hooked another 9lb 8oz cod, I had a twitchy bite on my whole squid bait, followed by a real hard pull-round and a slack line.

I picked up the rod and wound down to nothing. I was reeling like a madman when, all

of a sudden, I caught up with the fish and it went ballistic. This was no cod. From its speed, twists and turns, I guessed it was a bass.

It tried to go over the anchor rope, some way uptide, then hurtled downtide at amazing speed, again trying to go under the boat.

Once I had the fish under control I shouted for the net, knowing that any minute a bar of silver was going to break surface. Little did I know how big it was. As Roger Tipple grabbed the net and moved to the stern of the boat in readiness, he let out a few expletives when he saw the size of the fish. I hadn't seen it, but I trusted Roger's opinion. ▶

Preparing for a day out on Elysse



This cod took a lugworm and squid cocktail

TOP TIP

Make sure you carry a good selection of lead weights with you. The River Humber is notorious for fast tides, which is why the cod are there in the first place. Depending on the size of the tide when you are fishing, you'll need anything from 5oz breakout leads to 12oz fixed grippers to hold bottom when uptiding, and plain leads up to 1lb 8oz when fishing downtide.



9lb of angry bass for Dave

Before he could guide the fish into the net it took off again, this time kiting along on the surface from left to right, into my field of view. Damn right it was a big bass, way bigger than I had first thought. With a big of communication, Roger told to me to keep it coming up the tide, before dropping it back into his waiting net.

As he lifted the fish over the side, he uttered the words "Nearly a double", and when I saw

it hit the deck I knew he wasn't far off with his estimate. When weighed, it went bang on 9lb. I was well chuffed, and after a quick couple of photos, alongside local rod Andy Waltham with his 9lb 8oz cod, I gently slipped her back into the water and she swam away none the worse for her ordeal. I continued with the whole squid bait after that, and it accounted for five of the larger cod I caught that day.

Roger Tipple caught some decent cod on crab baits too



The stamp of fish was very good



ALL YEAR ACTION

All too soon it was time to return to the marina. I'd caught 13 cod and a 9lb bass, keeping nine of the cod for the table – what a session! I think the boat tally was somewhere just shy of 50 cod between eight of us, plus loads of quality whiting and dabs.

A couple of days later, Chris took another party to the same spot and topped the 50 cod mark, adding a couple more bass.

It just goes to show that the Humber is alive and well, and it's fired me up for more boat trips there throughout 2020.

The cod stay in the river almost all year, but in far less numbers in summer. The peak season is from January to mid-April, in fact the big cod competition run by the Humber Cruising Association is held towards the end of March, when the chance of a decent cod is thought to be at its best.

In summer, the smoothhounds, bass and thornback rays take over, and there's some really good tope fishing. Offshore wrecking produces cod, pollack and bass.



The dabs didn't mind how big the baits and hook were

BEST TACKLE AND RIG

Although you'll be fishing in relatively shallow water (20-50ft), the tidal flow in the Humber can be fierce, so you'll need to tackle up accordingly, especially if you're fishing a big tide. As a result, use a decent uptide rod or a 12lb or 20lb-class boat rod to catch these cod.

We were fishing a small neap tide and I had no problems holding bottom with a 190g fixed lead weight and large whiting livebait during the strongest part of the tide.

It was the perfect time to fish a reel loaded with 30lb braid to reduce the amount of lead weight you need to hold bottom. Braid shows the savage bites from the smallest of codling much better than mono.

For the bulk of the fishing in the Humber, it's not worth using a leader. The addition of a knot between your reel and the fish only serves as a weak point and collection point for the masses of weed that can flood down the river at any time.

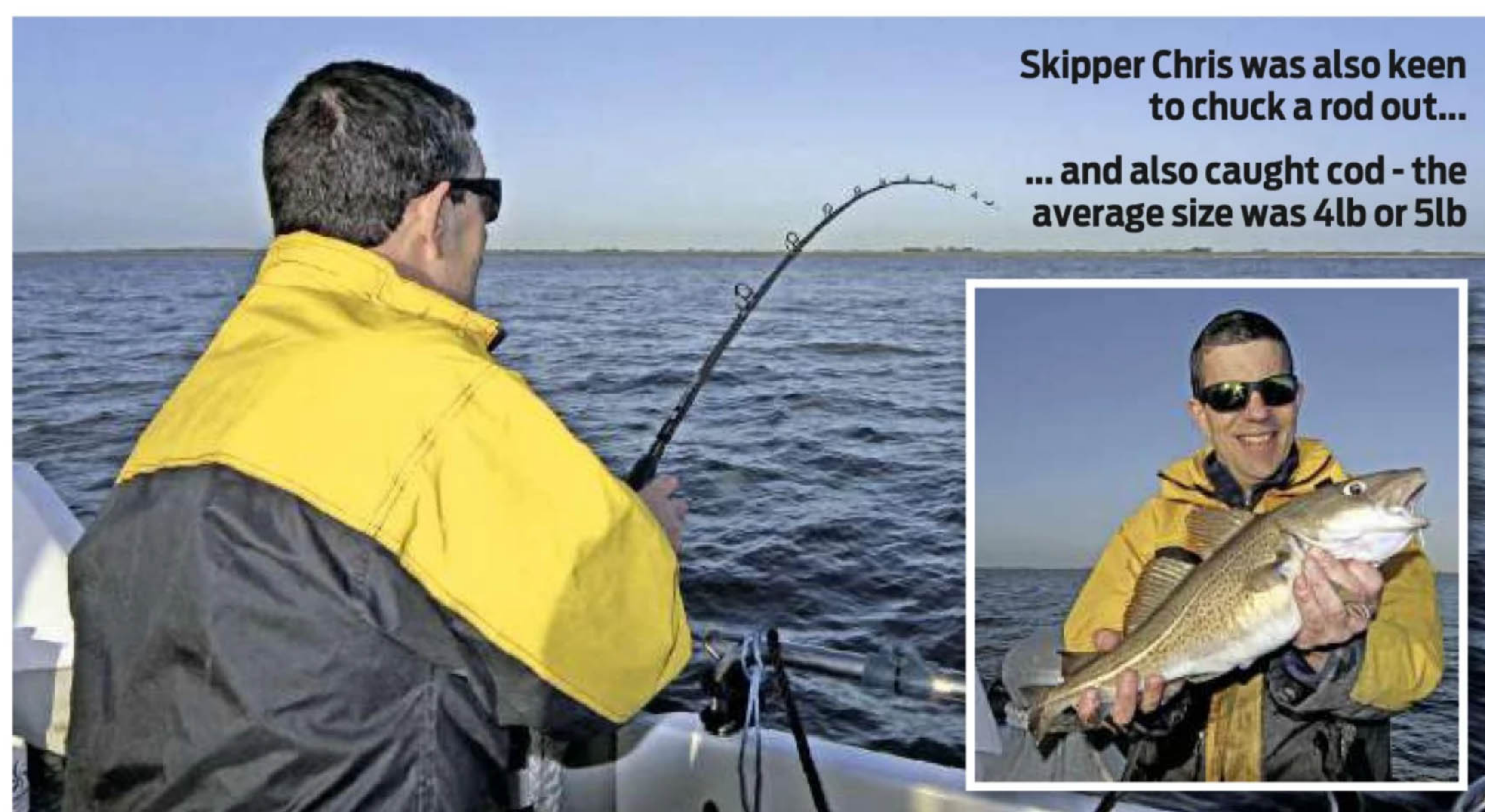


A whole squid on a fixed Pennell rig accounted for my big bass

It is best to keep rigs simple, and a couple have proven themselves for me over the years. The first is a simple running leger – a link swivel that houses the grip lead is threaded on the mainline, followed by a bead, then a swivel with a 3ft-long, 30lb hooklength is added with Pennell-rigged size 5/0 Sakuma Manta hooks.

Another tried and tested codling rig is the running paternoster. It's a little more complicated to tie, but the extra fiddling about really does pay off when you're catching fish.

You need to thread a swivel on the mainline, followed by a bead. Tie a second swivel to the end of the mainline, then tie on a 3ft length of 30lb hooklength material (fluorocarbon is best). Now tie a 2ft length of 40lb mono to the swivel that is sliding up and down your mainline. Add a link swivel to the end of this and clip on your grip lead. Tie on your chosen hook(s) to the end of your hooklength.



Skipper Chris was also keen to chuck a rod out...

... and also caught cod - the average size was 4lb or 5lb



NEED TO KNOW

Skipper Chris Fyson is no stranger to boats or fishing the River Humber.

He first fished her at the age of seven, and has since amassed 41 years of knowledge. He began his skippering career in 2003 and hasn't looked back.

He built the Elysse, a 36ft catamaran, from a shell to his own specifications. Powered by twin Nanni T4 270hp inboards, the Elysse cruises at 20 knots with a top speed of 24 knots. She has Raymarine electronics. Facilities include a toilet, hot and cold water, and ample seating.

She is licensed for 10 passengers and two crew up to 60 miles from a safe haven. Chris charges £550 for the entire boat for uptiding in the river, which is based on approximately nine hours at sea. For individuals it costs £65 per person.

Summer wrecking costs an extra £100 for the boat, simply due to the mileage required to get to the offshore wrecks. Tackle and bait are available, if required. There is parking at the harbour.

To book, call Chris, tel: 07831 692628. Facebook: Charter Boat Elysse.

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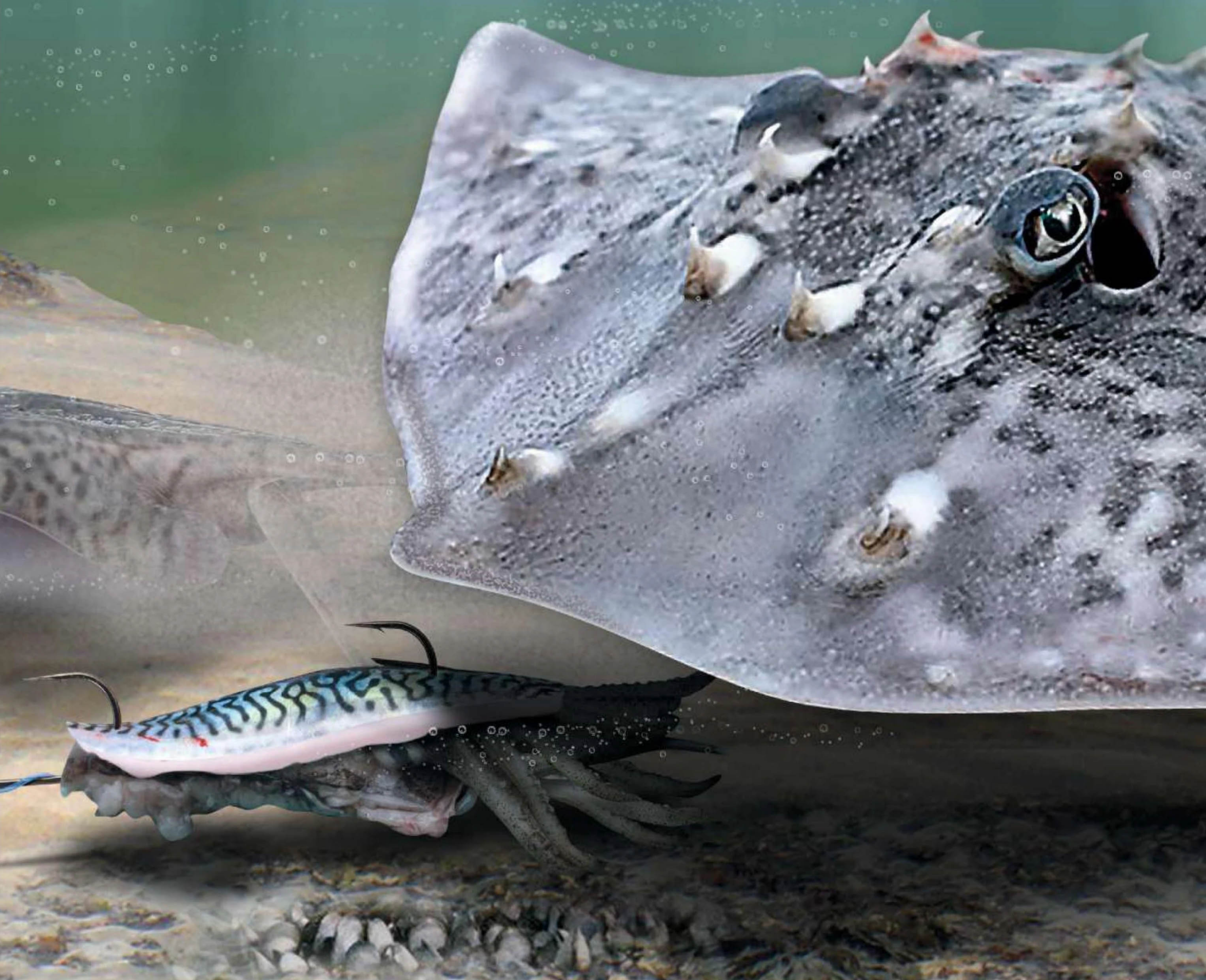
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Fall and rise of the Raja

Thornback ray numbers around Wales went into freefall back in the 1990s. Seemingly, now that pressure on these remarkable fish is easing, they are becoming more widespread



THE FIRST SIZEABLE SEA FISH I EVER caught was a thornback ray. This encounter with *Raja clavata* was on my first charter trip out of Swansea some time in the early 1970s, aboard the original Lady Helen with skipper Paul Radford.

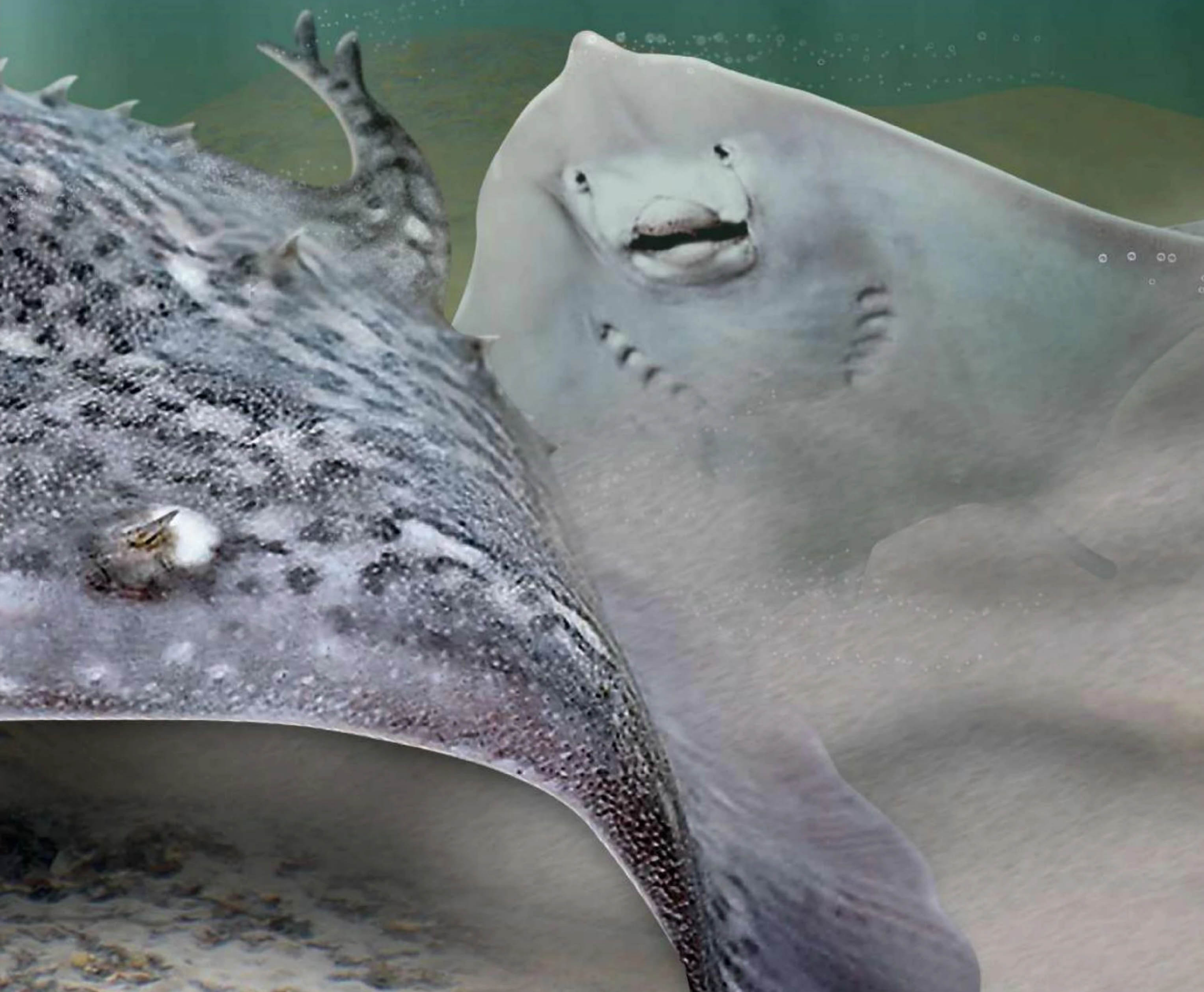
That fish weighed somewhere around 10lb, and I could not have been more pleased had I caught a double-figure bass. The same could not be said for my mother, when hours later I emptied the plastic bag containing the now congealed mass of stinking snot and slime out on to the kitchen worktop, and demanded she cook it for tea.

I have since caught a great many thornback rays from around the coast of Wales, notably from my home turf down south in the Bristol Channel. During my formative days of dinghy fishing, we would boat upwards of a dozen or more every tide without actually fishing for them, and mostly they weighed comfortably into double figures.

Prime time for thornback rays was always spring through early autumn, although on many occasions I have been surprised during a midwinter cod trip when a thornback rather than a plump cod has emerged from the murky upper channel water and glided over the rim of the landing net. That was how the fishing used to be, but in recent years it's been a different story. ▶



They may not give the hardest fight, but a thornback could be your biggest fish of a trip



GETTING SMALLER

Certainly thornbacks are still a relatively common catch here in the Bristol Channel, and if you set out to catch them, you'll most likely enjoy some success.

Many of the old marks where they used to be especially abundant – Sully Bay, Aberthaw, the deeper gullies off Stout Point and similar marks around Swansea Bay – still produce fish, but in recent years their average size has dropped from over 10lb to around 6-8lb, and fish over 12lb, which once were common, are now rare. For the record, my personal best for the species is 17lb 8oz, a fish caught over a patch of broken ground at Port Eynon Bay on the Gower.

Another noticeable change locally has been in the distribution of thornback rays. Back in the day, it was unusual, though not unheard of, to pick one up to the east of Cardiff. Boat anglers would find a few around the Cardiff North Buoy and an area called The Middle Pool and further east at Newport Deep. Shore anglers fishing the various mud and peat ledge marks upstream from the mouth of the River Usk would also bag a fish or two in summer and early autumn.

RAY REDISTRIBUTION

Today, thornback rays are caught all the way up the channel as far as the Severn Bridges, and more and more anglers specifically target them from the shore.

I used to regularly shore fish at St Brides, near Newport. Often we would fish the frequent and especially well-attended matches held here, yet never can I remember either catching or seeing a thornback, whereas today they are taken all along this still popular seawall venue.

Cardigan Bay, on the west coast of Wales, used to be one of the most productive places anywhere in the British Isles for catching thornback rays. Fishing with Vic Haigh aboard his Endeavour boats out from Aberystwyth, we would boat dozens a day, and at times we saw them almost as a nuisance species. These days, things have changed, and not for the better.

"During the 1980s the number of thornback rays we could catch out in Cardigan Bay was limitless," said Charlie Bartlett, skipper of Aberdovey-based charter boat Mikatcha. "I remember stopping for an hour's bottom fishing during a mackerel trip, and the group of holidaymakers I had on board caught between 80 and 90 rays. Another day we boated 120 fish in a four-hour session off Borth – 97 per cent of these were released."

He continued: "The big decline began in 2000, when my catch records showed we caught 'only' 756 thornbacks. The following year the number was down to 54...then in 2002 we caught just



Commercial fishermen blame the large number of spider crabs for the decline in ray, saying they eat the rays' egg cases

four. Since then we have not caught more than four thornback rays during any one year. Last year I didn't see one aboard my boat, and only know of one fish that was caught in the area.

"A marine biologist has told me that thornback rays are a territorial species, often returning to the same areas year on year to feed and spawn during the summer. Commercial fishermen working Cardigan Bay started targeting rays during the summer months, and the result of their indiscriminate fishing methods are now plain for all to see.

"They blame the large number of spider crabs for the decline in ray and lobster numbers, saying they eat the rays' egg cases. The irony of the situation is that the thornbacks used to feed on the spider crabs, keeping their numbers at sensible levels."

WELCOME TRAWLER BAN

The story north of the Llyn Peninsula in Caernarfon Bay is positive. In fact there are some good tidings from Andy Owen, who used to be the owner/skipper of Caernarfon-based charter boat Morgan James II: "Towards the end of the 1990s and for the first couple of years of the new millennium we saw a dramatic decline in numbers of thornback rays we were catching.

"In recent years these fish have shown encouraging signs of a recovery, so much so that these days, if thornbacks are what anglers want to catch, I know a few areas where they can expect to find them.

"Certainly, it's no coincidence that this increase in thornback ray numbers has started now that we have no trawlers working in the

area. I would say the average size of ray we see today is 6-8lb, whereas years ago many were 10-12lb. Hopefully, the recovery will continue and the catching of double-figure rays will again be a daily occurrence."

Returning south to the Bristol Channel, what I do find very interesting is that while we have seen changes in thornback ray numbers, average size and distribution, over the same period of time other species of ray appear to have done very well, especially blonde rays, which I have documented on several occasions. ■

WHY HAVE THORNBACK RAY NUMBERS RISEN AND FALLEN?

■ Thornback rays are territorial fish, returning to the same grounds every year, which makes them easy targets for commercial fishermen.

■ As a result, their average size (and presumably the number of adults of breeding size) has fallen.

■ However, since trawler bans have been in place, numbers have risen again.

■ Thornbacks are no longer such a prime commercial species as they once were, so fishing pressure on them should ease.

■ Anglers now very rarely kill thornback rays for the table, preferring to return them.





Must-have follow up on wrecks

Discover the true stories of lost ships and what they're like now

'Supplement to South Coast Shipwrecks off East Dorset & Wight 1870-1979' by David Wendes, 159 pages. Price: £20 ISBN 0955459222.

SOME OF YOU WILL REMEMBER A VERY good friend of mine, Lymington based Roger Bayzand, one of the UK's top charter skippers. Roger emigrated to Australia some years ago, but before he went he wrote an article in Sea Angler magazine, published in March 2007 on a new wreck book.

Written by dive boat skipper Dave Wendes, also based in Lymington, Hampshire, it was called 'South Coast Shipwrecks off East Dorset & Wight 1870-1979'.

Roger said: "Years of teamwork have resulted in a gem of a book that is not only a bible for divers exploring wrecks...but a valuable reference book for boat anglers too."

The book contained details of more than 170 wrecks, giving accurate positions for most of them, covering the sea area between 1° and 2° west, and as far south as mid-English Channel. That's quite a big area of sea. It excluded inshore wrecks east and south east of the Isle of Wight.

Now, Dave Wendes has produced a follow-up book called 'Supplement to: South Coast Shipwrecks off East Dorset & Wight 1870-1979'. I've just received my copy, and it follows exactly the same size, style and format as the original.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

At this point I must state that it is not a reprint, but contains details of an additional 37 wrecks, with accurate positions for 26 of them. There are new wreck identifications, more historic images of ships and crew, as well as some stunning underwater colour images.

Looking at the size of some of the machinery on these wrecks it's no wonder we anglers lose so much gear on them. Writing from Australia

after receiving his copy, Roger said: "Why would a book about sunken shipwrecks be of interest to sea anglers? Because shipwrecks are often an oasis in a barren seabed that holds concentrations of resident and migratory fish, thus the accurate position of a wreck is gold to an angling skipper."

He continued: "Dave Wendes is a diver and skipper who has spent many years hunting and researching wrecks off the central part of the English Channel and his first book 'South Coast Shipwrecks' was well received by anglers because it revealed the position of several previously unknown wrecks."

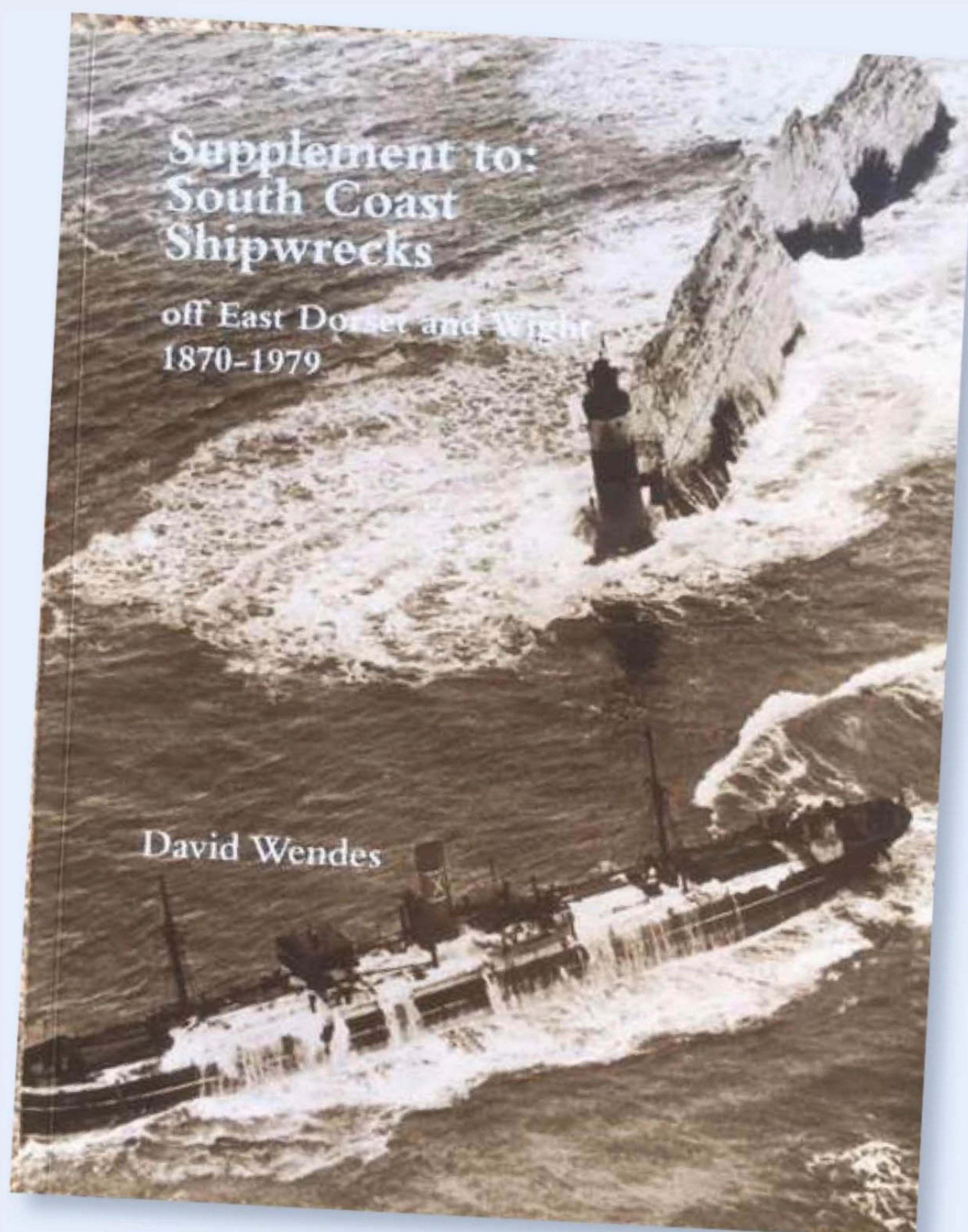
FASCINATING PHOTOGRAPHS

"Dave's latest offering adds even more wrecks in detail and gives more about the identity and history of these sinkings. From a wreck fishing skipper's perspective, I was fascinated by the underwater photographs of the wreckage as it stands today, as well as the side-scan images that show the extent and orientation of the wrecks. This can be vital information when positioning your boat to get the best fishing".

Roger concluded: "I also found that my customers were really interested in the history and tales behind the wrecks. This latest book contains many photos of the vessels whilst still afloat. These give anglers much more of a graphic image of the ship rather than just a lump on the seabed. If you have just a slight interest in maritime history you will find 'Supplement to South Coast Shipwrecks' a fascinating read."

This is indeed a fine supplement to the original, as not only are more wrecks identified, details are given of how they are orientated, how high they stand, the nature of the surrounding seabed, and, most important of all, precisely where they are. This is all extremely useful information for wreck fishing.

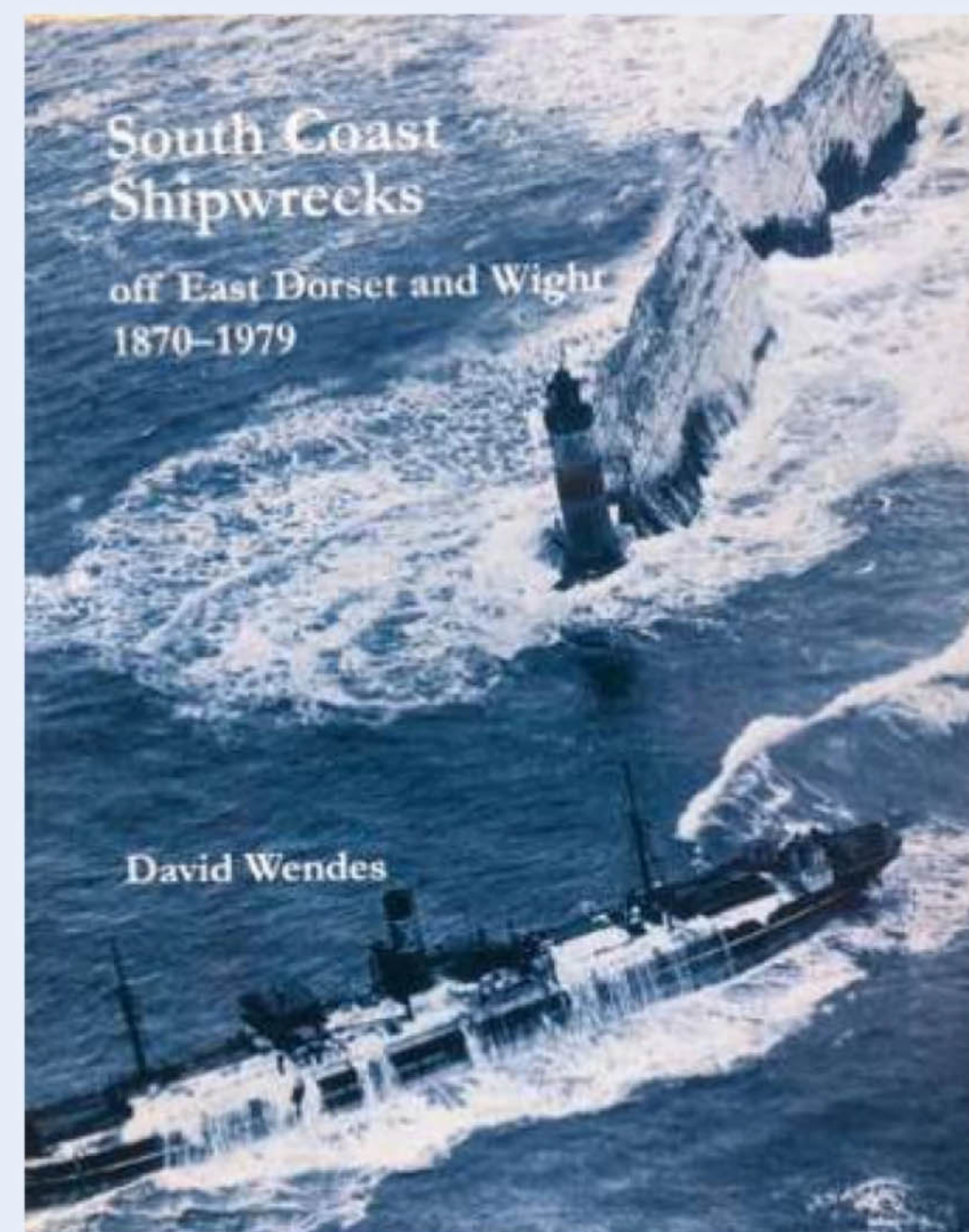
There is also fascinating information describing how these wrecks were identified. The new book is a worthy addition to the original, and as the title says, it's intended to supplement it. It certainly does that.



As such it's a must for those keen on wreck fishing or interested in shipwrecks. It's produced in good quality softback for £20. The original is still available at £25, and Dave is offering a discount price if you want both books, while stocks last, for a combined price of £35, a saving of £10. Post and packaging costs £4.50.

The two books combined give details of more than 200 wrecks, all painstakingly and thoroughly researched and, in most cases, dived on by the author.

■ Books are available via Dave's website: www.wightspirit.co.uk.



The original book, 'South Coast Shipwrecks off East Dorset & Wight 1870-1979'. 296 pages. Price: £25.



Bluefin bounty

Tuna campaigners step up the
chase for a recreational fishery



CAMPAIGNERS ARE LOBBYING THE UK Government to establish a more wide-ranging catch, tag and release programme for Atlantic bluefin tuna in UK waters this year.

It follows hot on the heels of the announcement that Ireland's successful bluefin tagging project will be extended and take place from July 1 to November 20. It is hoped the UK programme would be similar to the Irish scheme. A meeting has been secured to press the matter further.

The ultimate goal of campaign group Bluefin Tuna UK and the Angling Trust is to achieve a recreational catch and release tuna fishery. They predict such a fishery would boost the economy for hard-pressed coastal communities, including charter boat operators and tackle shops.

In 2018 and 2019, DEFRA and CEFAS operated the ThunnusUK project, placing satellite tags in 39 bluefins to find out more about the movements of tuna in our waters.

Following lobbying from the campaigners, limited numbers of accredited recreational anglers were allowed to take part in the tagging

in 2019. They also secured an expansion in the ThunnusUK area of operations to include Welsh waters and those off the Outer Hebrides. However, only nine days involving these anglers took place. It was blamed on the late approval of angler involvement, bad weather and competing demands of tagging in Wales. Of the 26 fish tagged off Cornwall, and three in Wales, only three were caught by the recreational anglers.

The Scottish approval came very late in the year. Conditions were against the capture team, with no fish tagged, but observations confirmed the presence of bluefins in those waters.

Given the continued return of bluefins each summer to UK waters, the Government is considering extending the original two-year mandate of ThunnusUK into 2020. Any expanded recreational input, like that in Ireland which uses floy or 'spaghetti' tags, could be in addition to ThunnusUK's satellite tagging.

As for 2021 and the longer term, any demand for a tuna fishery would have to be based on the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) quota. In November, ICCAT has its triennial meeting, which would ►

offer an opportunity for the UK Government to request a quota, to be applied from 2021. Things need to move quickly, though, because campaigners must persuade the Government to commit to this by the summer, and then gather the evidence ICCAT requires in time for that crucial meeting in November.

WIDER PROGRAMME

The Angling Trust backed the move in 2019 to expand Thunnus UK's operations to include Wales and Scotland, and the inclusion of experienced recreational anglers in the process.

"Even if the satellite tagging operations of Thunnus UK are extended into this year, a wider UK floy tagging programme would add significantly to the baseline knowledge of that programme, with potentially hundreds of catch, tag and release events all across the UK waters," said David Mitchell, the Angling Trust's head of marine.

While satellite tagging provides much-needed information, several other European countries have taken a different route to this small-scale tagging. Recent rule changes by ICCAT allowed Ireland, Denmark and Sweden to operate wider scale research programmes using large numbers of recreational anglers to catch, tag and release bluefins. Instead of the expensive satellite tags, simple floy tags were applied. The fish were measured and details of time and place of capture recorded.

Ireland's Catch And Release Tagging (CHART) programme in 2019 was hugely successful, tagging 219 bluefins from 15 authorised vessels. Denmark tagged 91 fish in 2018 and 50 fish last year. Such was the Irish programme's success, it was announced in February that it will be repeated and expanded in 2020, and potentially 2021 and 2022. Now, between July 1 to November 12, up to 25 authorised vessels will be allowed to take paying anglers out to catch bluefins for this programme.

FIGHT CONTINUES

Bluefin Tuna UK and the Angling Trust have secured a meeting with DEFRA officials to discuss such a CHART programme for the UK to be authorised.

In line with their ultimate aim to see the establishment of a recreational bluefin tuna fishery in UK waters, they will continue to lobby the Government to obtain the necessary quota at November's ICCAT meeting, and authorise such a fishery from 2021.

"We believe the UK should take the opportunity afforded by ICCAT rule changes to facilitate a wider, more inclusive catch, tag and release programme for bluefin in UK waters this year," said Steve Murphy, founder of the Bluefin Tuna UK campaign.

"Several European countries have done so with great success over the last few years, and there are very compelling arguments for the UK to follow this lead. In addition to the much larger-scale scientific data that can be gathered, hundreds of anglers operating on dozens of specifically trained and authorised charter vessels would bring significant economic benefits to many hard-pressed coastal communities."



CAMPAIGNING BODY: WHAT IS BLUEFIN TUNA UK?

In 2018, Steven Murphy set up Bluefin Tuna UK, a campaign/lobbying group, to press the Government to establish a recreational bluefin tuna fishery post-Brexit.

He secured the backing of the Angling Trust, and since its launch it has gained the support of some MPs.

Bluefin Tuna UK succeeded in getting the Government to both expand the geographical remit of ThunnusUK to include Wales and Scotland in 2019, and also, importantly, to sanction the inclusion of experienced recreational anglers in the capture process on authorised charter vessels.

"Weather and a host of unfortunate factors limited RSA involvement to just a handful of anglers last year, but it was an important precedent. Over 100 experienced anglers were successful in registering and obtaining approval to take part," he said.

SUCCESS STORY: THE IRISH TAGGING PROGRAMME

The Irish approach is subject to annual approval by ICCAT and the European Union. It is the only option open to them, unless the EU wants to give Ireland a part of its share of the global bluefin quota. Ireland, Denmark and Sweden all carried out such programmes in 2019 using recently relaxed ICCAT rules.

Following the success of last year's Irish catch and release tagging pilot programme (known as CHART) when 15 charter skippers participated, in 2020 a maximum of 25 authorisations may be granted to qualifying charter angling skippers. The charter skippers are trained to carry out the tagging and data recording. The project data is reported to ICCAT.

Last year, in a three-month season, there were 219 bluefins tagged and released alive, all of which were handled according to strict guidelines. CHART allows anglers to participate in the catch, tag and release of these tuna on the authorised boats. A successful review of the 2020 programme is expected to allow the scheme to operate in 2021 and 2022.

For 2020, Irish skippers have until March 6 to apply to be part of the scheme.

WHEN TUNA MET JAWS

Data download reveals nasty end for tagged big bluefin

One of the findings of the UK tagging was the discovery that an estimated 300lb tuna had been eaten by a killer whale.

The ThunnusUK team revealed that a 2018 tagged fish had popped its tag last year. When the data was uploaded as the tag came to the surface, it told a grisly story.

A temperature spike, which lasted for several days, was recorded and also showed repeated, periodic dives and trips to the surface. After several days the tag came to the surface off the coast of Spain. Analysis of the data suggested that the big bluefin had been eaten by a killer whale, which ingested the tag as well, which then exited the orca a few days later.

ThunnusUK has released details of data from nine tags applied in 2018, which released and uploaded data to satellites last year. The tracks showed very wide-ranging travels. Some fish journeyed thousands of miles across the Atlantic before returning to the Eastern Atlantic and/or Mediterranean. Such knowledge will help inform future management decisions about bluefins in UK waters post-Brexit.

Another tag fitted in October 2019 was set to release after just three days to show immediate post-release behaviour. The data revealed that this fish had travelled a straight-line distance of 380km in only three days, popping its tag in the Bay of Biscay.

In 2019, 26 Atlantic bluefins were captured, satellite tagged and released off Cornwall. Another three were similarly tagged and released in the Celtic Deeps. That added to the 10 fish tagged in the South West in 2018. ■





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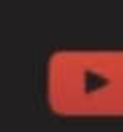
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GET INTO BOAT FISHING PART 10

CLASSIC WORM & SQUID BAITS

Dave Barham explains how and when he uses the popular choices

PROBABLY the most common of all sea fishing baits, lugworm is used throughout the year to catch almost everything that swims. There are a few types of lug, with blow lug, yellowtail and black lug being the most common.

I always have a few wraps of black lug in the freezer because it's a very good bait and easy to grab for an impromptu session when fresh bait is hard to get.

During the summer, a single lugworm fished in a muddy estuary will catch you bass and flounders, while a cocktail of black lug, prawns and squid is a killer bait for big plaice. Later in the year a cocktail of lug tipped with squid is the staple for most cod anglers.

One of my favourites is a black lug sausage bait that delivers a huge scent trail in a relatively small package that can be cast very easily. I've used it for two decades and it has caught me a lot of cod and bass over

the years. It's better suited to freshly gutted black lug.

Ragworms are available from most tackle shops and online bait suppliers throughout the year. It's a very popular bait with bass anglers, due to the wriggly nature of the worms and the scent they emit. They're also very popular with winter cod anglers, especially in the Bristol Channel.

You can present ragworms in a number of ways, from simply hooking a single worm through the head when drifting for pollack and bass, to mounting multiple worms to give a much larger, scent-laden bait.

Even a single king ragworm mounted on a Pennell rig is a great bait for big bass and stingrays. Of course, a single worm threaded up the hook is a killer for black bream, soles and all manner of other species.

The cocktail baits are endless too, rag tipped with a strip of squid being a firm favourite with plaice anglers.

Perhaps one of the most widely available and often used baits, second only to maybe worm baits and mackerel, squid is a great bait to have in your freezer, and one that can be fished in a multitude of ways.

You can cut squid into thin strips for tipping off other baits, or even fish the strips on their own for species like black bream. Use a squid head or half a head, piercing the eyes for added scent attraction for bream and gurnards.

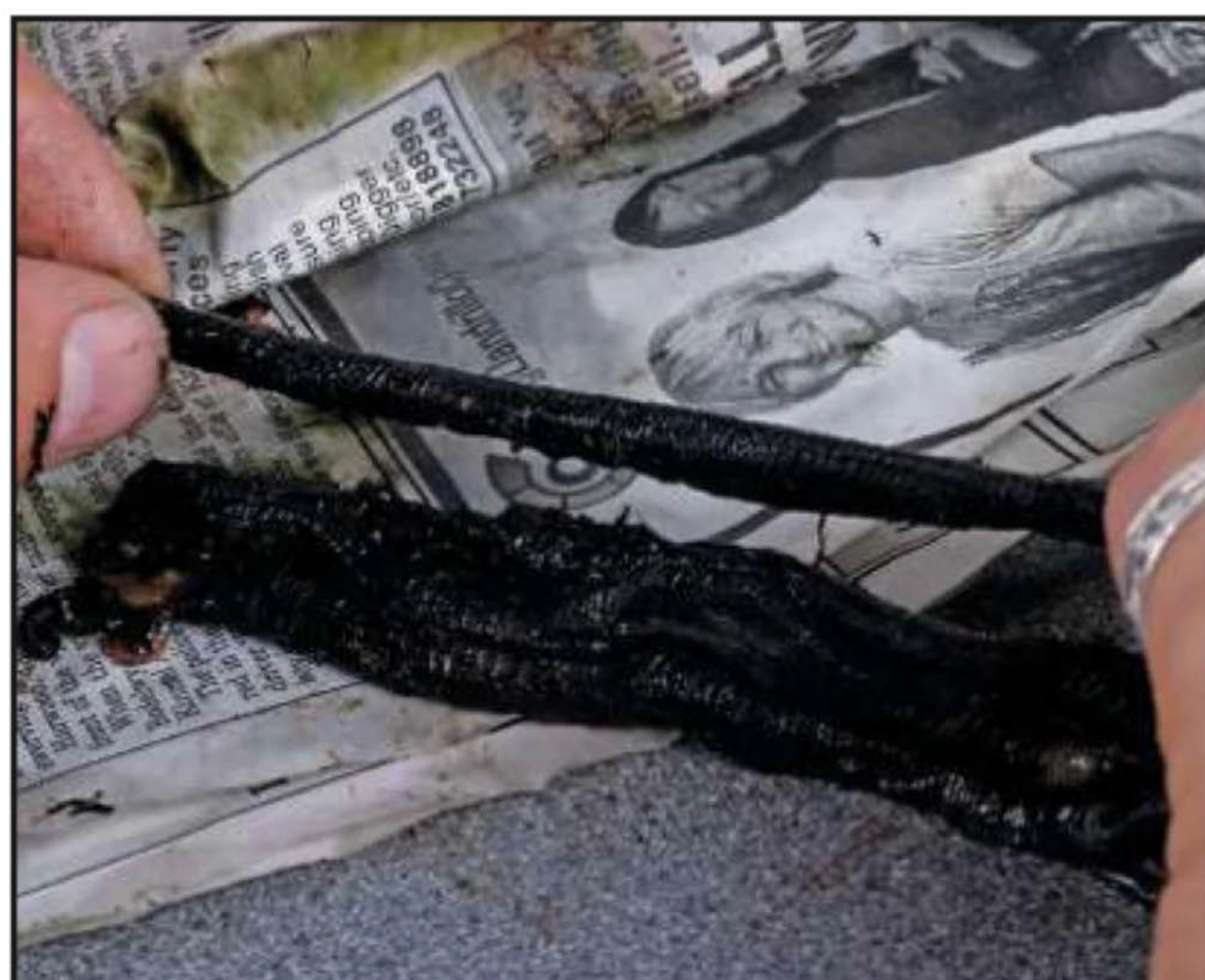
Use half a squid for smoothhounds and rays or a whole squid for big bass, cod and even conger eels – the list of presentations and species you can catch is pretty much endless. Stuffing a squid mantle with lug, rag, a peeler crab or even mussels adds another dimension to your cocktail baits. However, you can't beat a whole squid fished on a Pennell rig to tempt specimen fish, especially cod and bass.

Here are three ways to hook the baits...



Lug are used all year round

HOW TO MAKE A BLACK LUG SAUSAGE BAIT



1

Lay half a dozen black lug alongside each other to form a long, sausage-shaped bait.



2

You'll need plenty of strong bait elastic to transform the loose lug into the magical sausage.



3

Start whipping the worms together at one end and work your way along the bait.



4

Pass the bottom hook of a Pennell rig into the end of the sausage – just like you would a single worm.



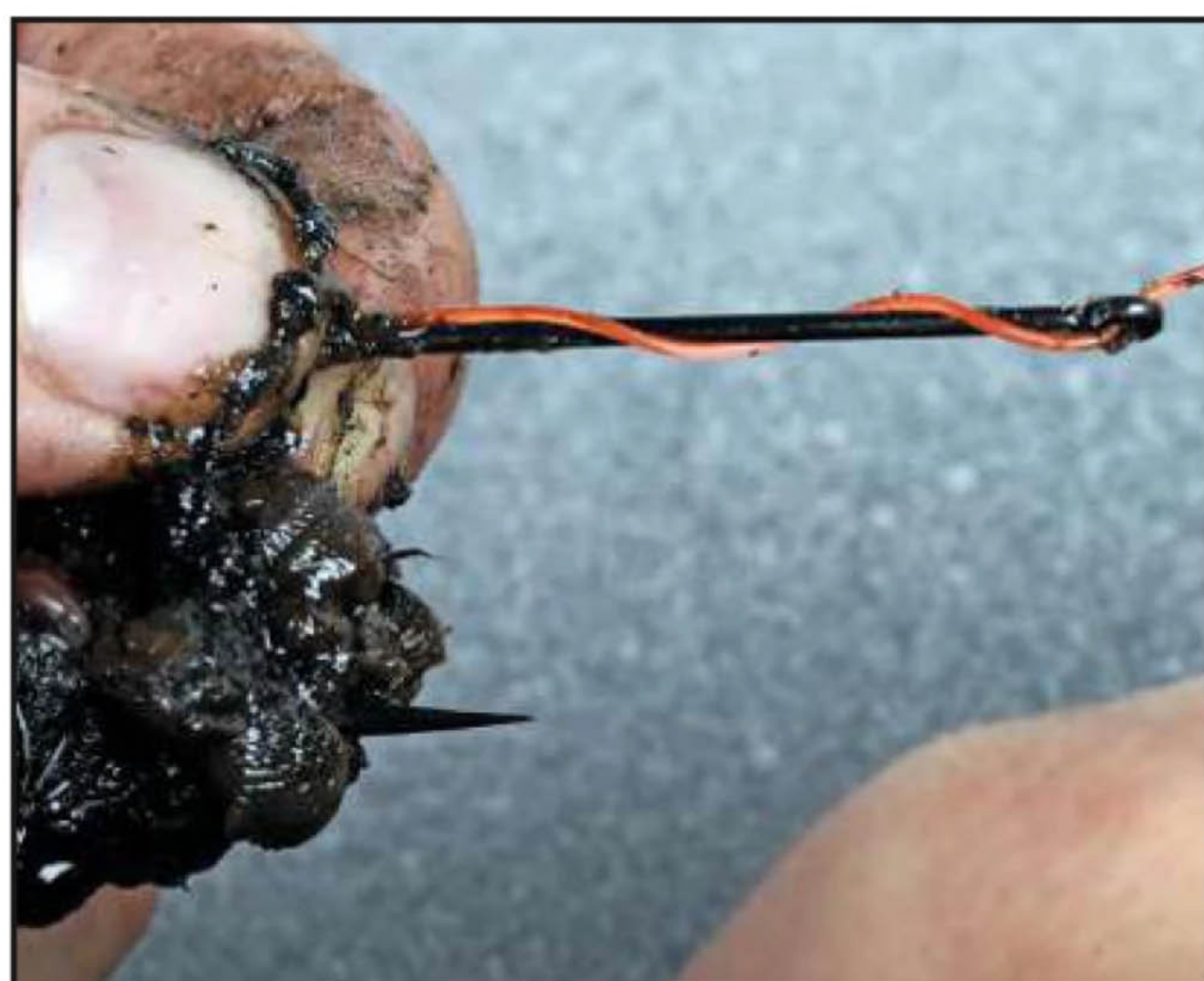
5

Thread the sausage up the hook shank, exactly like a normal lugworm, bringing the point out of the end.



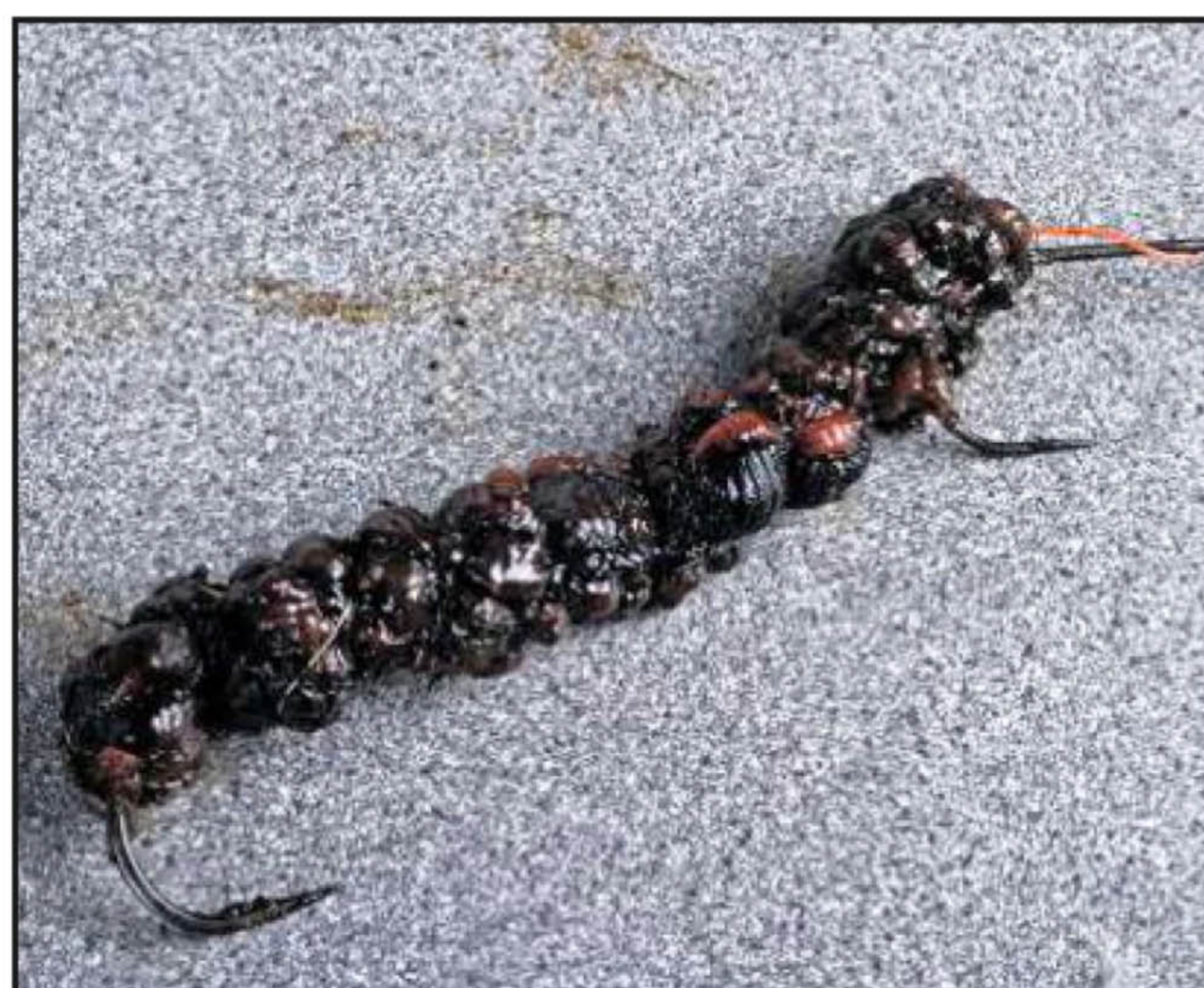
6

Make sure the hook exits dead centre at the end of the sausage and ensure the hook point is exposed.



7

Secure the top hook of the Pennell rig in place and pass the point through the top of the bait.



8

There you have it – a small bait that packs a mighty punch in the scent stakes. It's ideal for fast tides.

SEA SCHOOL

NEW SERIES: START BOAT FISHING - PART TWO

HOW TO BAIT UP WITH RAGWORMS



1 Pass point of the hook through the mouth of the ragworm – taking care not to get nipped by the pincers.



2 Continue threading the worm up the shank of the hook, just like you would do with a lugworm.

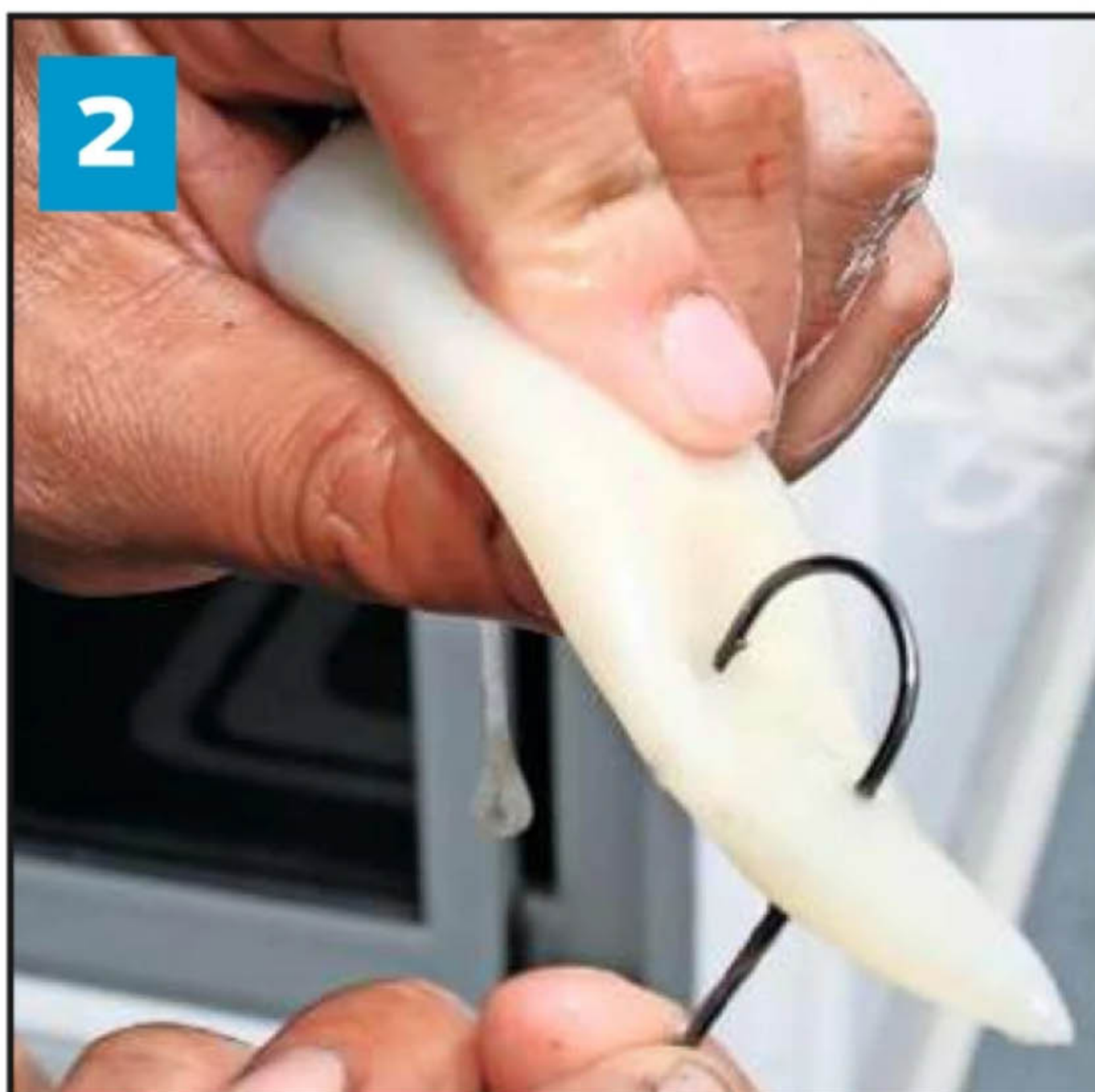


3 You can either fish a single worm, or thread multiple worms up the hook shank and snood, to present a larger bait with more scent. Tip a single worm off with a thin strip of squid for added attraction.

HOW TO HOOK A WHOLE SQUID



1 First peel the skin off the squid. You don't have to do this, it's just my preference.



2 Begin by weaving the squid on the bottom hook of your Pennell rig, like this.



3 When the whole squid is woven on, pass the point of the hook right between the eyes.



4 Secure the top hook in place by winding the trace line around it three or four times.



5 Pass the point of the hook through the tip of the squid and pull tight – now you're ready to catch a cod.

NEXT MONTH:
Great crab baits
and cocktails to use
throughout the summer.

USE YOUR THUMB

It may seem strange, but here's a great way to control your reel

CASTING A FIXED-SPOOL REEL THE traditional way using your index finger for release is both practical and natural – but not for everybody, I'm afraid.

Reasons why it doesn't work range from arthritic fingers to apparently trivial points such as simply not liking to cast that way. Lifelong multiplier casters often find it awkward to switch control from thumb to index finger.

As I mentioned a few issues ago, release gadgets can make life easier, and most of them do a fairly good job.

For the unlucky few, mechanical aids are the only way to get baits into the water. But when release control is more about preference than necessity, most anglers do just as well, if not better, with a piece of webbing or some other tough but flexible strip. I use 20mm webbing rescued from an old haversack.

Since the cut edge of webbing frays badly

after a couple of casts, the first step is to seal the ends with a lighted match or gas flame. Use just enough heat to weld the fibres together. Overdoing it means flames, stinking smoke and a rough finish that may snag the leader when the cast flies away.

Rather than anchoring the strap to the reel itself, I find that trapping one end between the reel foot and the reel seat works well and takes but a few seconds. Unscrew the winch fitting until the end of the reel foot comes free, sandwich the strap between reel and rod, then tighten the fitting just a little so that the reel sits still but the strap can slide around. The system works with coasters as well, kind of, but a proper fixed or sliding reel seat is far better.

ALIGNMENT

The next step is to align the strap with the spool and bale-arm. It is important to get this right, which usually calls for a few test casts. When the strap is around the leader and held down with your

thumb, the angle in the leader should be slightly acute, as in the photo below. This way, even modest thumb pressure easily resists the force of a hefty cast, yet still produces a smooth, instant release.

When the strap is in the right place, tighten the reel fitting to secure the strap. About 50mm of webbing under the thumb is plenty. If necessary, trim the end of the strap and heat-seal the cut end.

Casting is perfectly straightforward, requiring no change to set-up or technique. Release timing will take care of itself, exactly the same as casting a multiplier reel.

Fishing this way will probably seem strange at first, but soon becomes second nature. You might hear a bit of slap when the leader escapes from the strap, but line flow should be smooth and clean. If it isn't, and especially if the leader cuts into the strap, change to a different material; something slightly stiffer with a smoother surface should do it. ■



SHORE SPECIES SPOTLIGHT Part 7

THORNBACK RAYS

Often an all-year target, fishing for this now prolific species is best during March to June



WHEN & WHERE

These rays are almost a full-year target for shore anglers, though they can be locally seasonal too in areas like North and Mid Wales, also the Yorkshire coast and East Anglia.

They show in most areas right through from February to November, with the period from March to June a high point, coinciding with the main crab peel, then again from mid-September through to early November, coinciding with the autumnal influx of whiting.

On deeper rock venues, steep beaches and maybe estuary channels, thornies are likely to be caught during smaller neap tides as well as spring tides.

For optimum results on shallower surf beaches, choose the bigger spring tides. These rays favour the tides occurring on the three days before the highest tides. Once the tides fall lower, so too, generally, will catches.

Rays often move with the tide, but do so in gradual steps. Low water and the first hour of the flood see you cover fish beginning to move in with the fresh tide. They seem to pause briefly on this ground, then move

closer inshore again during the two middle hours of the flood.

Thornbacks can be found quite close in just inside the breakers as the tide floods, but generally a cast beyond the breakers into deeper water is better.

They rarely come closer than the mid-tide mark, and as the tide peaks and ebbs, they soon move back out to deeper water, often beyond casting range.

Try to fish in fairly settled, predictable weather. Sea conditions should be slight to no more than a moderate swell. They don't mind coloured water after a storm, but prefer less-coloured settling seas.

Off the rock ledges and the deeper water beaches, thornbacks can be taken in daylight, but on shallower venues, target a low-water flooding tide that begins in full darkness.

On shallow beaches, the rays like to be on the seaward side of shallow, rising sandbanks. Look for distinct areas where there are depressions that hold water over low tide because rays work through these as the tide floods. They also like the corners of beaches where sand meets rock.

Fish the beaches at night for the best results



BAIT SELECTION

Thornbacks are not fussy eaters, but their preferences can be seasonal. Early spring fish will take herring. If you can get fresh, then all the better. Frozen mackerel tipped with squid is good too. By late March and through to June, on the beaches, peeler crabs can be deadly, especially if the water is a little coloured. Mackerel also works, as will small, whole squid.

Middle summer and through to September, stick to fish baits such as mackerel, Bluey and squid. By September, sandeels can come into its own in some areas, but is a sometimes bait. Fresh mackerel is good on its own, but if you use frozen, try wrapping a slice of squid around it to give it a boost. A Bluey/ squid cocktail also works well.

From the shore, many anglers fish baits that are too big. The ideal size ray bait to allow the ray to easily get the bait in their mouth, and to retain good casting distance, should be no more than three inches long. A good way to do it is to cut a three-inch by one-inch slice of mackerel, leaving plenty of flesh on it. Pass the hook point through the skin side and right through, then back through at the base from the flesh side. Cut the same sized slice from the main body of a squid and wrap this around the flesh side of the mackerel. This compacts the scent and keeps the bait pumping juice out for longer.



Mackerel no more than 3in long is best - secure on the hook with bait elastic (below)



Squid is a great bait for thornbacks



Sandeels are good in some areas



SEA SCHOOL

GREAT SKILLS FOR CATCHING MORE FISH

TACKLE & RIGS

Ray fishing is mostly about long range or fighting sizeable fish up from depth. This necessitates a standard 4-6oz beachcaster around 13ft armed with a robust multiplier, such as the Penn 525 series loaded with 20lb mono line and a 60lb shockleader.

Alternatively, use a longer European-style beachcaster, up to 15ft, with an 8000-sized fixed-spool reel loaded with 30lb braid and tapered shockleader, the latter being best to maximise casting distance without the need for complicated casting styles.

The pulley rig is the best choice. Start with 50 inches of 60lb mono. At one end tie on a Gemini Lead/Bait Clip. Slide on a size 5mm

bead, a pulley rig bead and another 5mm bead. Leaving about 20in of free mono to form the hooklength, tie in a figure-of-eight knot. Slide a rig crimp on to the free end, followed by a size 3mm rig bead and an 8mm bead to form a bait stop. Now tie on a size 4/0 Viking pattern hook. Lastly, squeeze the crimp in place 1½in above the eye of the hook.

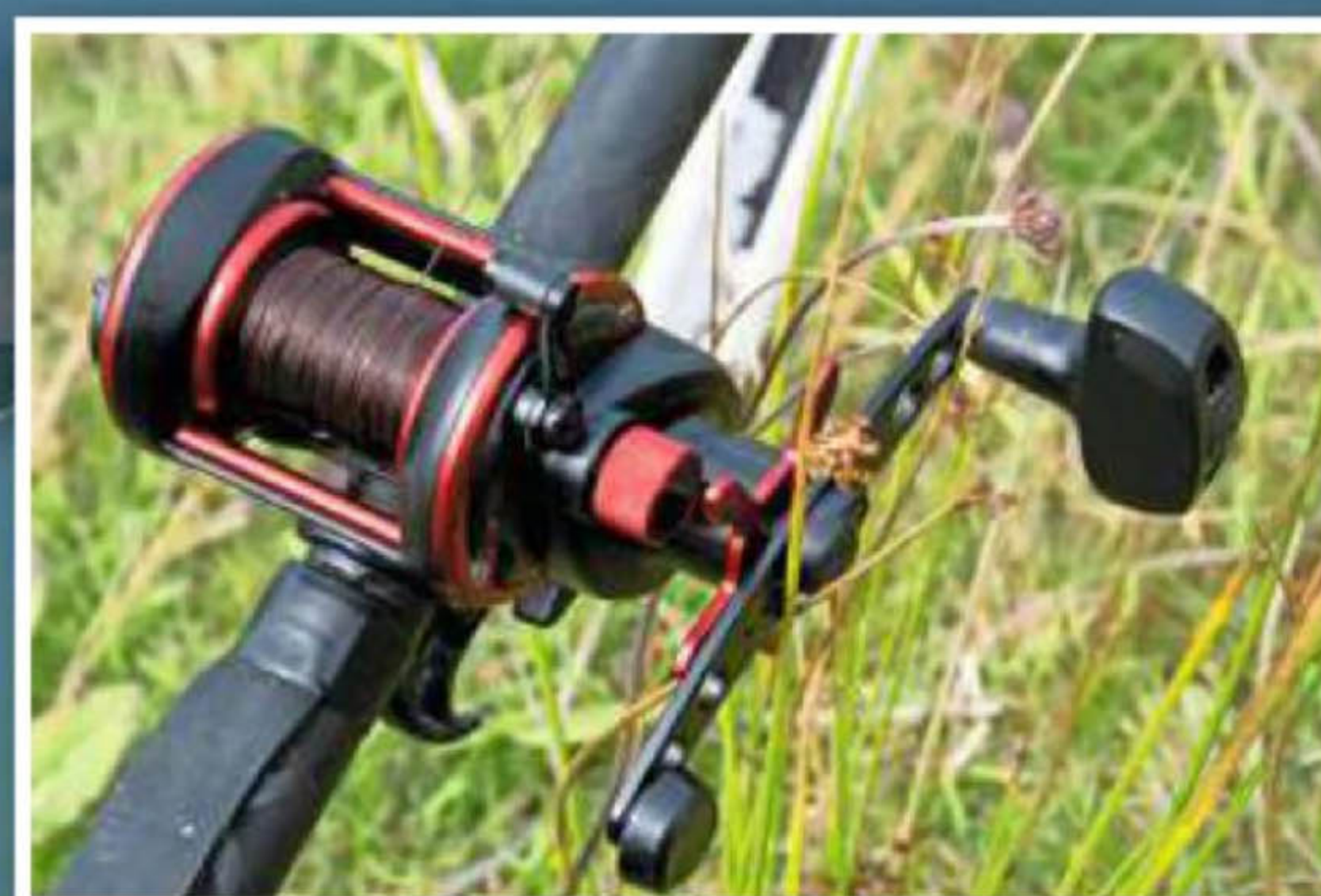
I don't use a two-hook Pennel system for rays. They are slow, determined feeders and smother a bait then swallow it. Two hooks are ideal for hit-and-run roundfish like cod and bass, but rays are slow and greedy and won't move until they have the bait fully in their mouth.



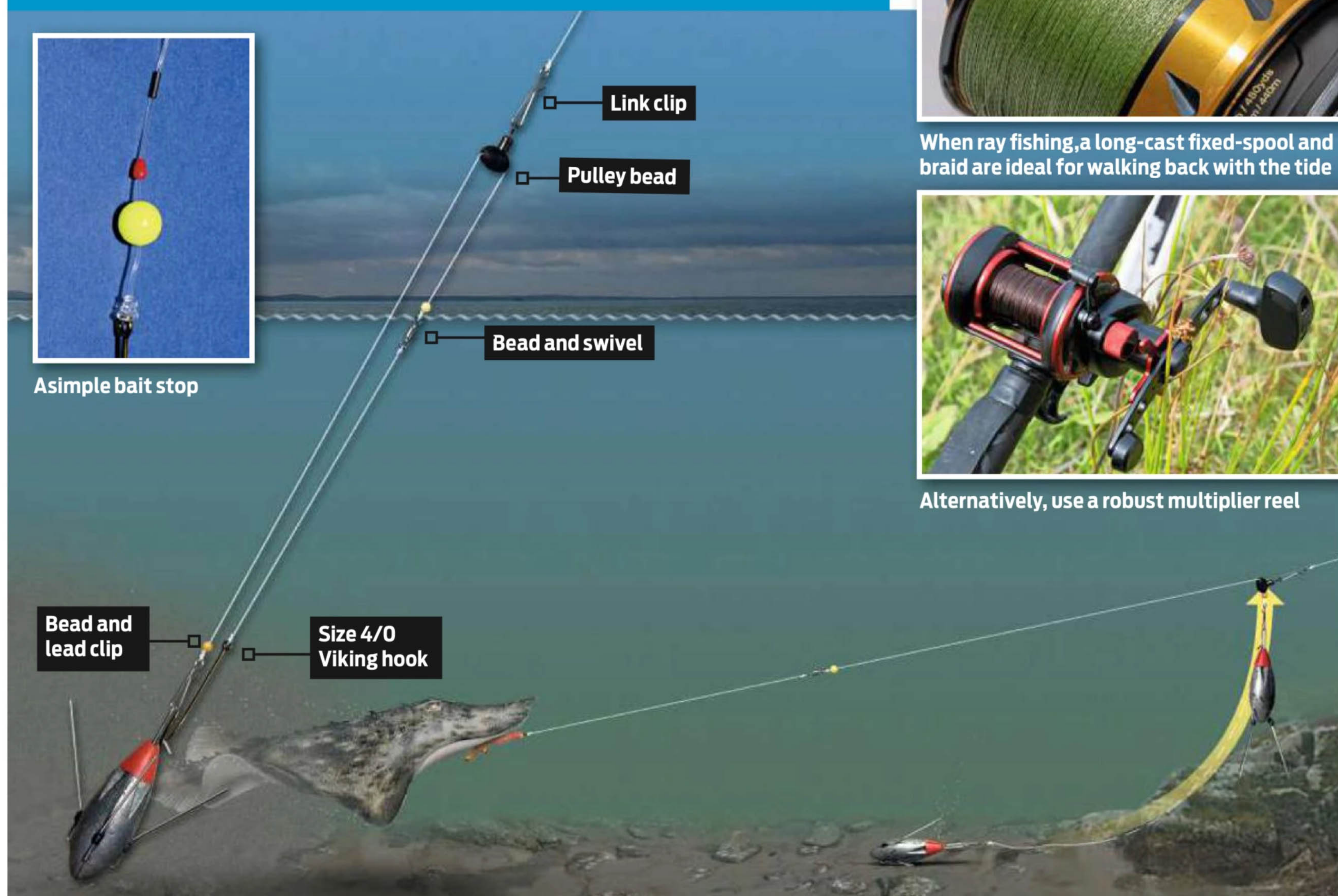
Mustad Viking size 4/0 hooks are ideal



When ray fishing, a long-cast fixed-spool and braid are ideal for walking back with the tide



Alternatively, use a robust multiplier reel



TOP TACTICS FOR RAYS

Thornbacks are hunters and pick up the scent of a bait from some distance away and swim towards it. Be patient and leave baits anchored to the seabed for 20 minutes, giving the rays time to find it. In semi-coloured water, a lumo lead (see picture on page 79) can help draw rays to the bait.

Thornies often travel in small groups, usually one or two females, plus two or three attendant males. If you catch a ray from one particular area or feature, expect to get another one or two in quick succession. Therefore, keep your casts accurate.

On very shallow beaches, using the Euro-style rod and an 8000-sized fixed-spool reel with a large line capacity allows you to cast

as far as you can, then gradually release line as you walk back with the advancing tide. This is called 'lining-back' and is a great way to fish one or even two decent-sized baits far out into the tide on very shallow venues. It's highly effective for rays.

Ray bites are fairly predictable. The ray settles over the bait, so the rod tip shudders, dips and shakes. The ray now takes the bait into its mouth. As soon as it has the bait in the mouth, invariably the fish moves away, pulling the rod tip steadily over. It will hook itself against the weight of the wired lead, but make sure by lifting the rod, winding in any slack line until you feel the weight of the fish, and let the bent rod pull the hook home. ■



KNOW YOUR SPECIALIST RIGS

Wacky rig

Here's how to create two rigs from one basic horizontal presentation

THE WACKY WORM Rig offers a natural horizontal presentation allowing the soft plastic lure to fall slowly through the water column.

Here, the lure is a four-inch Z-Man Finesse WormZ.

Fish this rig around vertical structures and docks.

You can add a Neko or nail sinker to the head of the lure and create a Neko Rig, which causes the lure to stand on its end, vertically off the bottom.

HOW TO MAKE IT

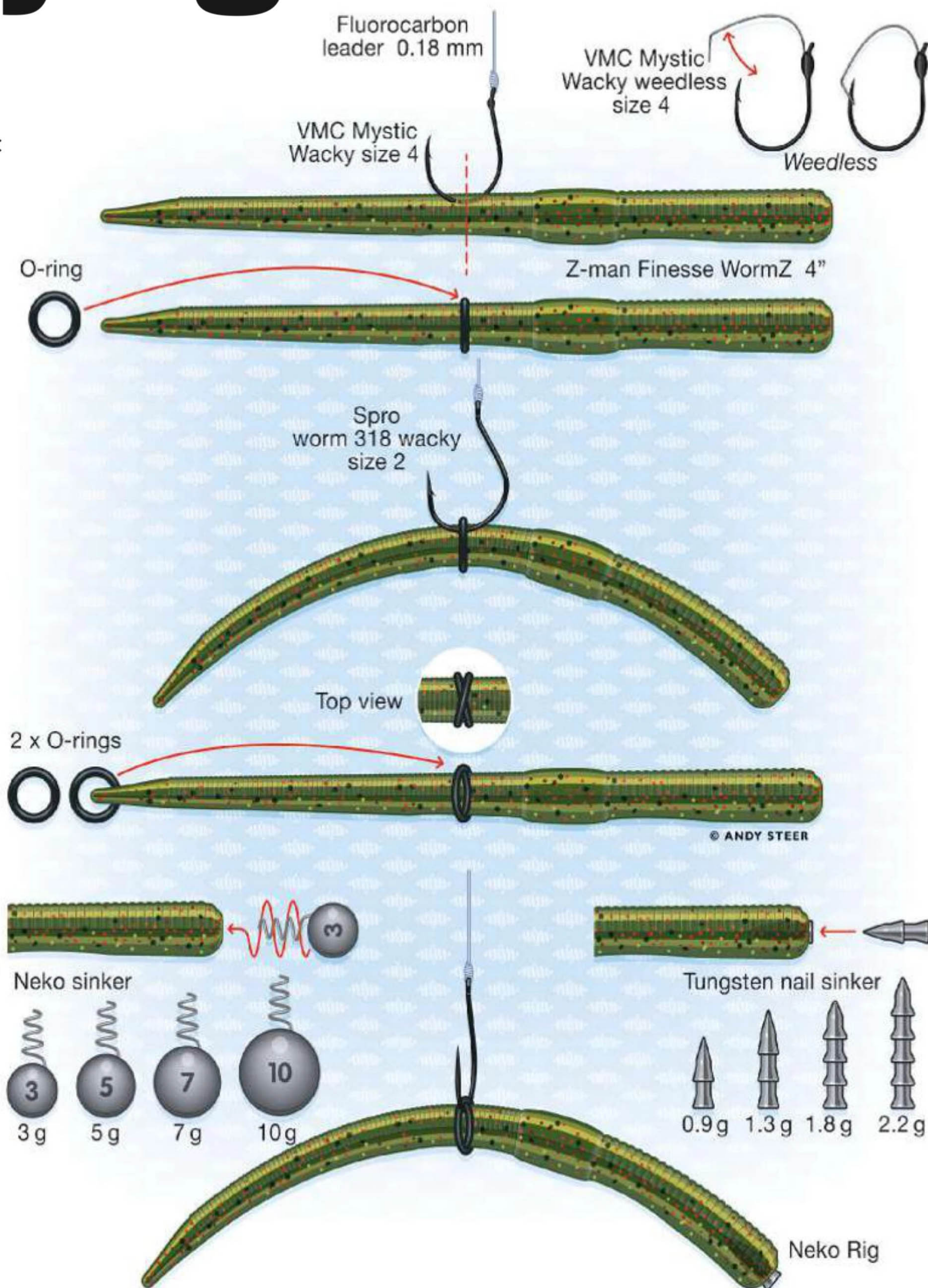
First tie a VMC size 4 Mystic Wacky hook to your 0.18mm fluorocarbon leader and pass the hook through the top edge of the worm at its mid point.

Alternatively, add an O-ring to the mid point of the lure.

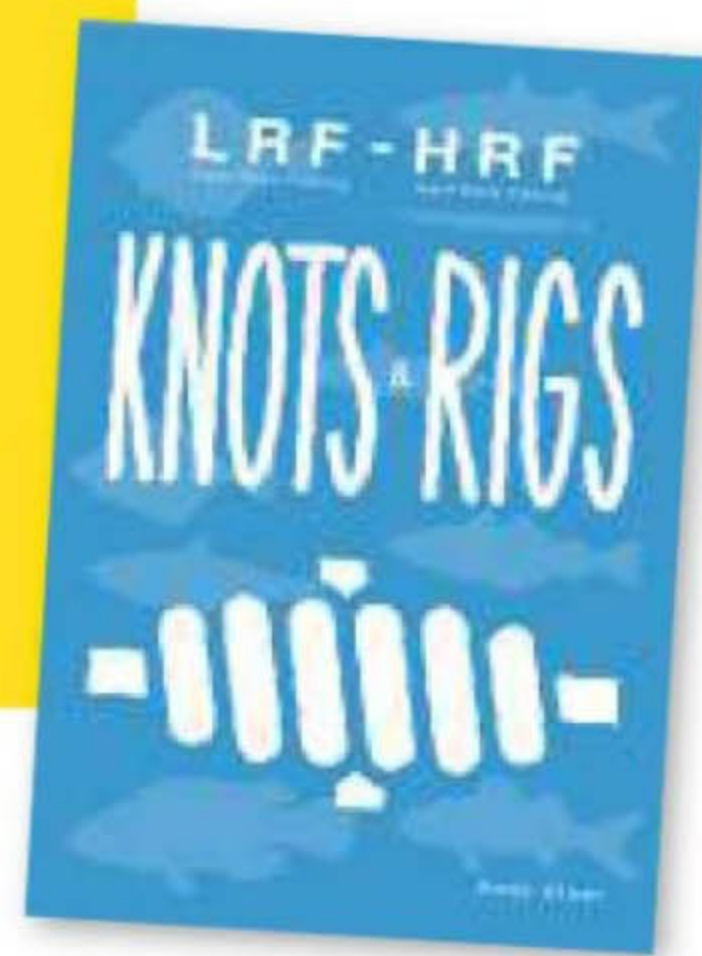
Then, using a Spro size 2 Worm 318 Wacky hook tied to your leader, insert the hook under the ring.

When converting this to a Neko rig, use two O-rings positioned in the middle of the worm, but overlapping each other (as shown on the diagram right).

Insert a Neko sinker (3g to 10g) or nail sinker (0.9g to 2.2g) into the head end of the lure. Finally, insert the hook under the O-rings.



The printed edition of 'Light Rock Fishing - Hard Rock Fishing Knots & Rigs' is now available at <http://amzn.eu/d/ctqSCI9> With the FREE Kindle reader app, read this book on your computer, tablet, or smartphone. Free Kindle Reader app: www.amazon.co.uk/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=200783640



ONLINE LINKS TO THE VIDEO:

Wacky Worm Rig: <https://youtu.be/fqadJDvjPAk>
Neko Rig: <https://youtu.be/V7tBTskn1Cs>



Q&A

SHORE FISHING

ASK THE EXPERTS

WHEN SENDING YOUR QUESTION, PLEASE REMEMBER TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS



PAUL FENECH

Sea Angler's features and tackle editor Paul is here to solve your shore angling problems.



DAVE LEWIS

Based in Newport, South Wales, our contributing editor Dave answers boat fishing questions.



MARK CRAME

Suffolk-based Mark gets a thrill from fishing afloat on a kayak. Send him your kayaking queries.



HENRY GILBEY

Angler and photo-journalist Henry, based in Cornwall, will answer questions on lure angling.



DAN SISSONS

The Portsmouth angler will provide answers on the sport of light rock fishing (LRF), the go-anywhere tactic.

HOW TO ASK A QUESTION

■ WRITE TO:
Q&A, Sea Angler,
Media House,
Lynchwood
Business Park,
Peterborough
PE2 6EA
Email: SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk
Online: www.facebook.com/seaanglermag

Q: What's the difference between a flounder, plaice and dab?

ROBIN FLETCHER, WEYBOURNE, NORFOLK

PF says: Flatfish can take on the colours of their surroundings and there will invariably be different, localised colouring.

Flounders tend to have a more square-shaped tail, and if you run your hand along the back from tail to head it will be quite rough. Some will often have orange flecks across the back too.

Plaice are more round and smooth. They also have six or seven lumps behind the head. Their most defining feature are the large orange spots across their backs.

Dabs tend to be much smaller than a flounder or a plaice and lighter in colour. The lateral line has a much more pronounced curve just behind the head and then straightens to the tail.



FLOUNDER



DAB



PLAICE

Q: The tip ring on my rod has broken and I've heard it's an easy job to replace, is this true?

KEV YATES, LANCS

PF says: Generally, tip rings are likely to have been fixed into position with a hot melt glue material. They are very easy to remove and replace by using a lighter.

Gently heat the leg of the tip ring and using a pair of pliers – not fingers – simply slide the broken ring from the blank. Clean and remove the old glue at the tip.

Once cleaned, heat a little hot melt glue and spread it around the area where the new ring will sit. Quickly, slide the new ring into position, remove excess glue with a damp cloth and leave to dry.

If you're unsure, perhaps ask your local tackle dealer if they will do it for you.



Q: I've heard that fishing at night under a full moon is not particularly good. Is this true, and should I avoid going fishing?

TED SOWERBY, MORPETH, NORTHUMBERLAND

PF says: I've had some fantastic night sessions catching cod under a full moon, especially if there was a decent swell crunching the beach. I would perhaps not choose to fish at a shallow venue during calm conditions when the moon is big and bright.

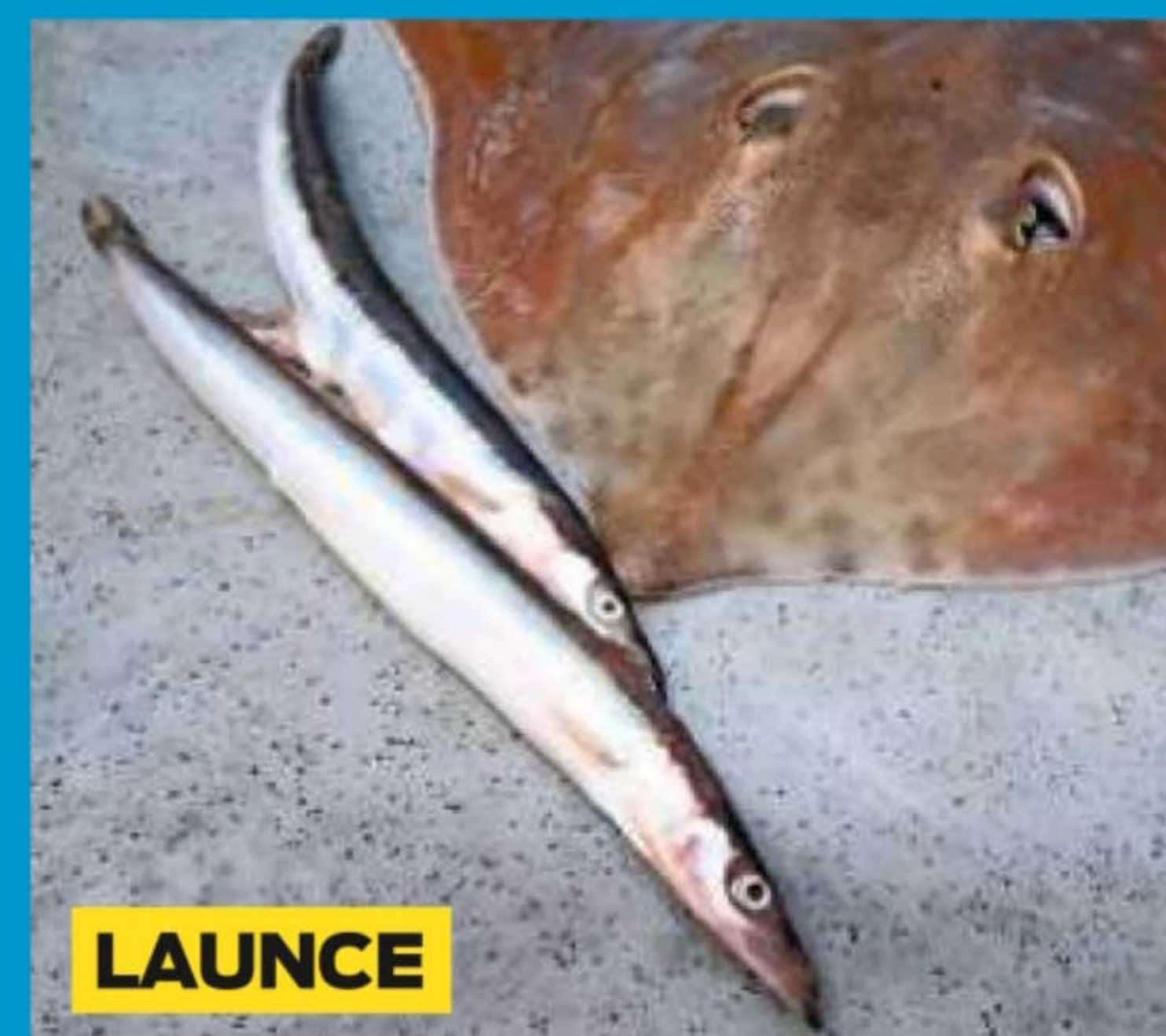
I know some lure anglers who prefer to target bass with surface poppers under a full moon.



Q: What is the difference between a launce and a sandeel?

STEVE CLIFFORD, BARNSTAPLE, DEVON

PF says: Launce (greater sandeel) are the largest of our species of sandeel and are a superb bait to use. They can be used as a livebait, deadbait, chunks, frozen or as a fillet. They catch a wide variety of species all around the UK and are often caught by anglers who are spinning or feathering for mackerel during the summer months.



Q: What is the best method of casting into a headwind to reach further?

GARY THOMAS, PWLLHELI, GWYNEDD

PF says: If the wind is particularly strong and blowing directly into the face, I always try to keep my cast flat and low.

If the sinker goes high, the wind just grabs it - and the mainline - and forces it back towards the beach.

Also, try and avoid using large, bulky baits as this will also reduce the distance you aim to cast.

Q: The tip section of my 14ft beachcaster has a crack in it just above the spigot. Can it be repaired?

ROB KNIGHT, MERSEYSIDE

PF says: You don't mention what model of rod it is because I would have suggested getting in touch with the company which sells them.

You could even take it back to the shop where you bought it and see if anything can be done there in regard to a replacement tip section.

Sadly, the real truth is that when carbon splits or cracks, there's nothing that can be done to save it. Repairs will only ever result in the original damage becoming revealed.

My advice is to try and find another tip section of the same model, or bite the bullet and buy a new beachcaster.



Q&A

LURE ANGLING

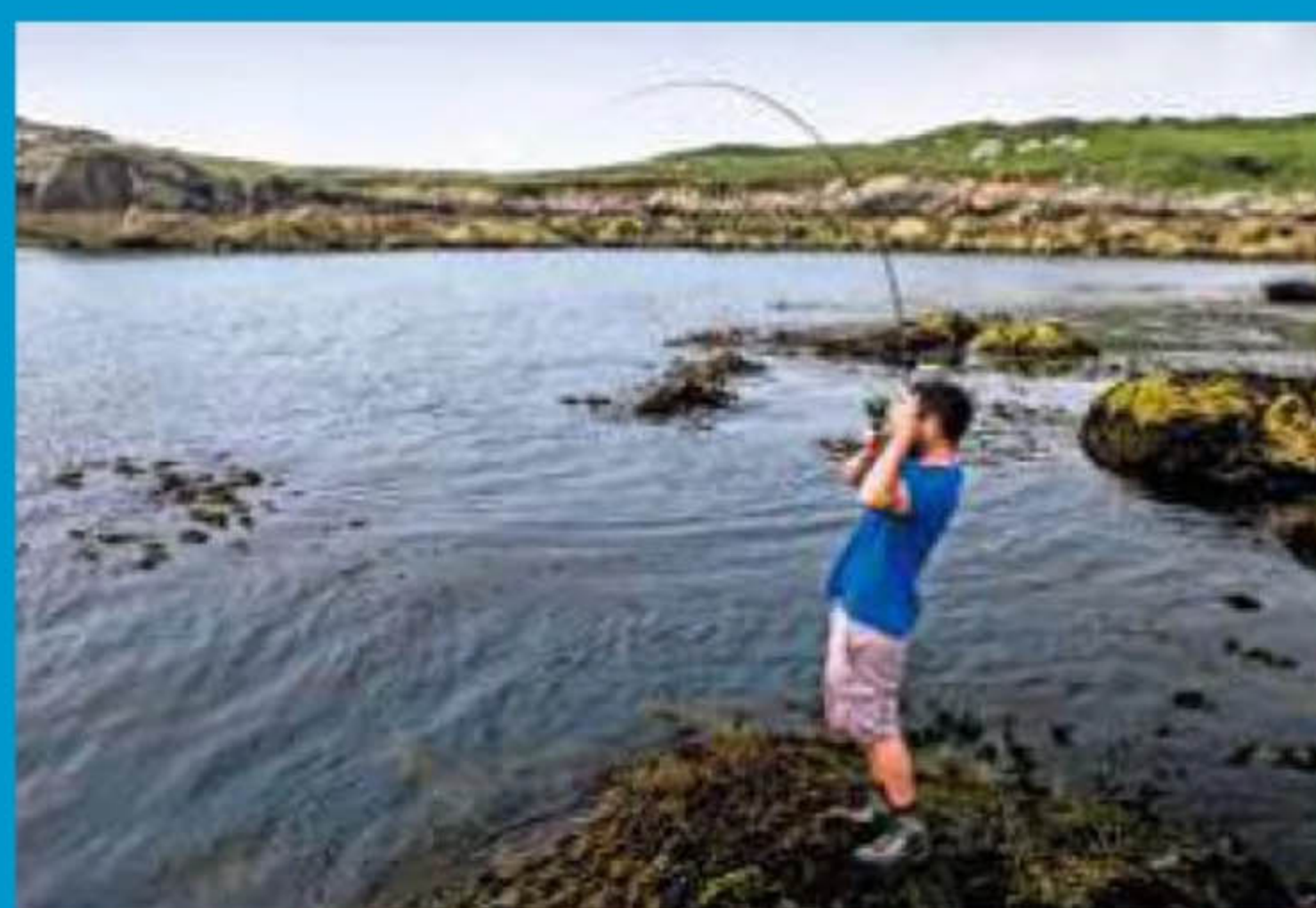
Q: I want to have a go at lure fishing for wrasse. Can I use bass tackle?

ANDREW PRITCHARD,
ASHINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND

HG says: The sort of rods and reels and mainlines used for a lot of our bass fishing are okay for wrasse.

The more you get into this exciting style of lure fishing, the more you may find yourself gravitating towards a slightly shorter and pokier type of lure rod. This helps with striking the fish hard and lifting them away from snags as fast as possible, because wrasse fight completely differently to bass.

Have a look at some of the Hard Rock lure rods from Major Craft as a good example of a wrasse lure rod.



Q: Do you always put studs in wading boots?

RICHARD CAMERON, DORCHESTER, DORSET

HG says: Yes and no. I wear boot-foot rubber waders from Vass for my surf fishing on sandy beaches, where grip is not an issue, hence there is no need for wading studs.

Out on the rocks and so on, though, I like to have studs in my wading boots. I only wish I'd known about studs and how much grip they can give back in my baitfishing days on the rocks.

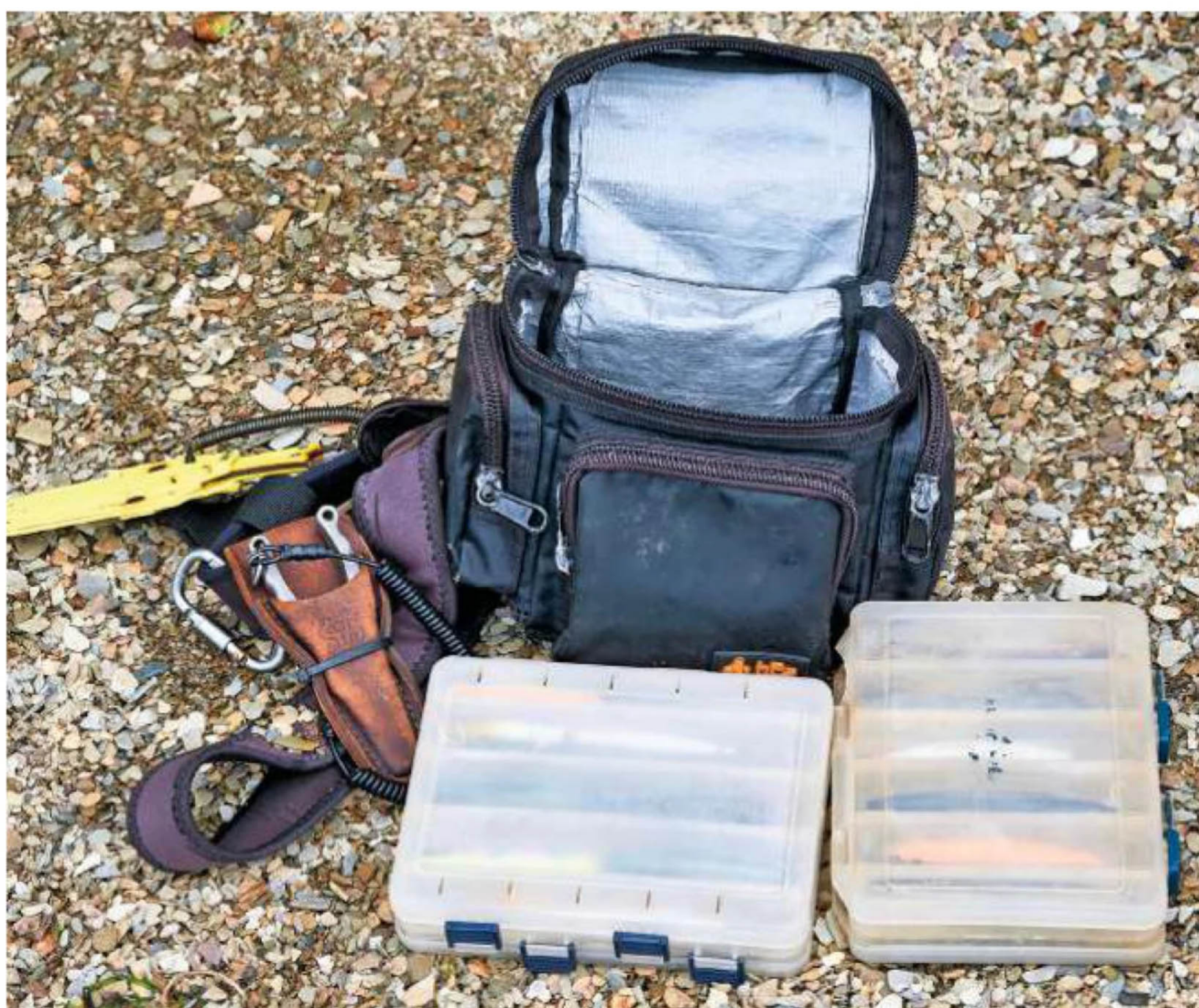


Q: I am confused by the different lengths and casting weights of lure rods. What type of rod should I go for?

PAUL BRADSHAW,
BARNSTAPLE, DEVON

HG says: Whatever suits you and your own bass fishing. You may get a lot of advice, but you're the person who will be fishing with it, so you need to be comfortable.

Match the casting weight of the rod to the sort of lures and conditions under which you will be fishing but, as a generalisation, I find it hard to look beyond a fast-actioned 9ft lure rod rated to cast within the 7-35g range.



Q: I think I am carrying far too many lures when I go bass fishing. What do you think would be a sensible number to take?

NIGEL WHEELER, ROMSEY, HAMPSHIRE

HG says: This is a common problem. I used to take so many lures I was struggling to fit my cameras in my rucksack.

These days, if my lures don't fit in a couple of those medium-size, washable lure boxes that sit at my side in an HPA Chest Pack, then they don't come with me. I have yet to regret cutting down like this.



Q: How do bass see our lures at night?

DAN ASHBY, SOUTHEND, ESSEX

HG says: I don't know, because we always consider this with our human eyes, but what are fish really seeing when a lure is moving

through the water on a really dark night? Is it more likely a bass is 'feeling' the subtle motions of the lure through the water and then homing in on it?

Night fishing is all about having the confidence that bass can and will locate your lure in the dark.

Q: Can you tell me if I'm going to lose bass if I don't use a leader?

LIAM GOODWIN, FAKENHAM, NORFOLK

HG says: I know anglers who don't use leaders for their bass fishing and they catch a lot of fish. However, I always use a leader because I like that bit of clear fluorocarbon or monofilament line between my braid and lure clip.

By using an FG knot for tying the braid to leader, there are no worries about any weakness in your set-up.



Q: Do you ever find that you're catching pollack from the rocks and it suddenly goes quiet? Any ideas on what to do?

PETER STOCKS, CARLISLE, CUMBRIA

HG says: I believe that pollack get spooked when anglers are catching fish and lures are landing on the water and

being fished throughout the water column.

If I am catching pollack and then it goes quiet, I change the colour of my lure; I love oranges and pinks.

If I get no more action after a while, I will move to another spot further along the coast or somewhere else completely.



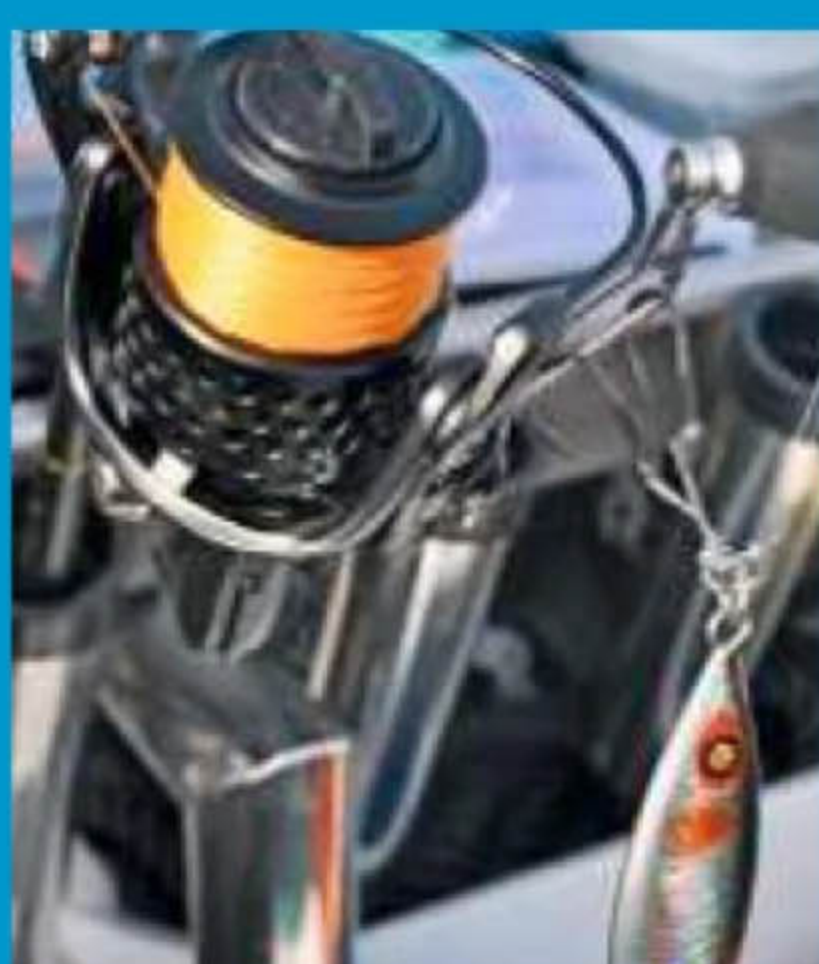
Q&A

BOAT ANGLING

When using a multiplier reel, small slow-pitch jigs take so long to drop through the water column that the boat has drifted past the feature being fished. Any advice?

BRETT WILLIAMS, NEWPORT, S WALES

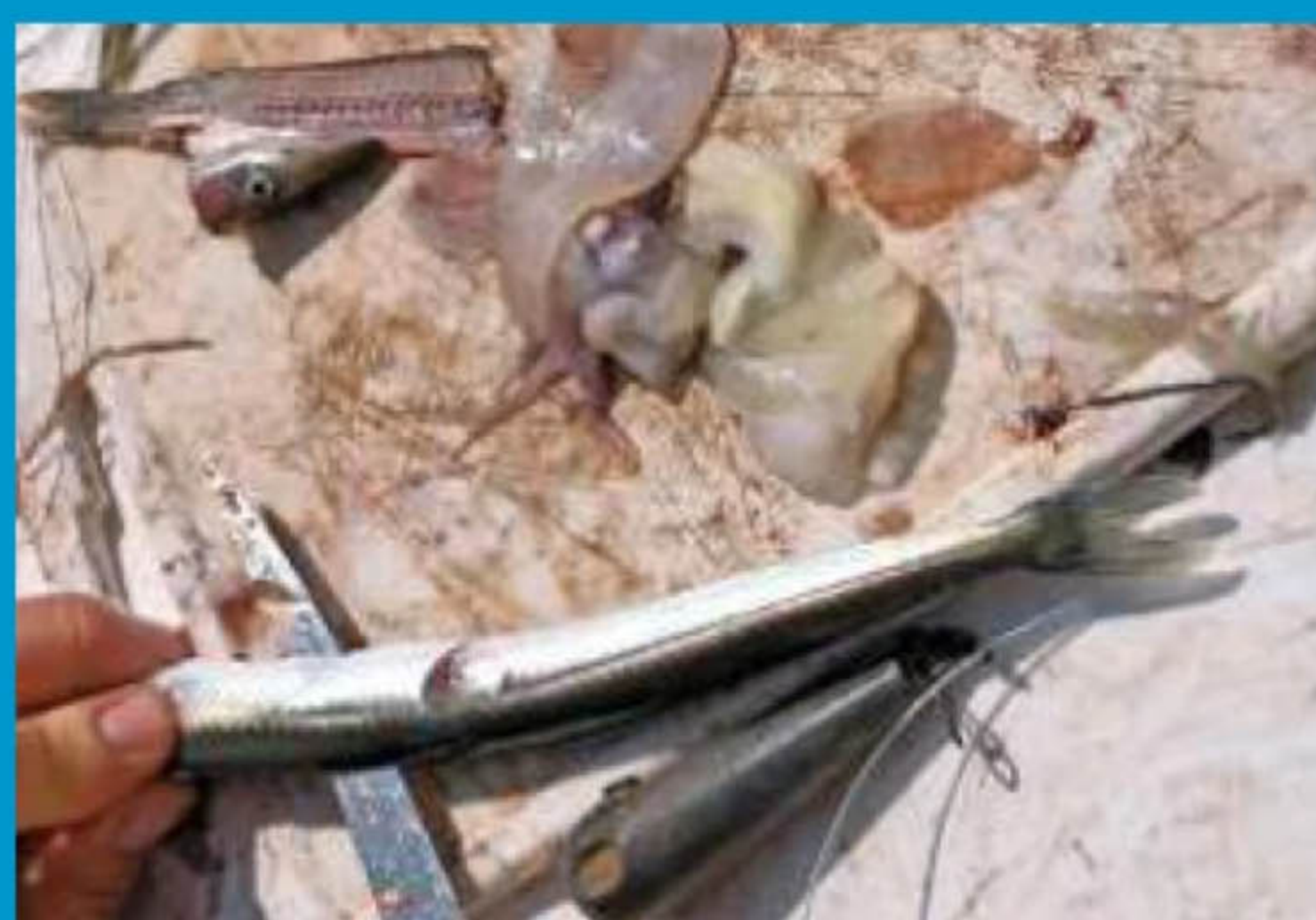
DL says: Multiplier reels are fine when using large jigs because the weight of the jig falls swiftly through the water column with sufficient momentum to keep the spool revolving. As a result, many anglers prefer to use a fixed-spool reel for this style of fishing. A fixed spool allows line to pour easily from the spool, with the result that even a very small jig will be able to fall freely and quickly down to the seabed.



Q: I have read that a sliver of launce is a good bait for turbot, brill and other species of flatfish. What is this?

TONY CALVERT, SEVENOAKS, KENT

DL says: Launce, also known as greater sandeel, can often be caught on small Sabiki-type feathers in the vicinity of sandbanks. A 'sliver' is a long, thin fillet cut from one side of the fish.



Q: Are there any advantages in rigging my small boat for tiller steering, rather than operating from a forward helm position?

PETER WRIGHT,
BECCLES, SUFFOLK

DL says: I wouldn't say there are any advantages, but there is something pleasing about sitting in the stern of a boat and operating a tiller.

If you intend to run long distances to fishing marks, then a forward helm would probably be more practical, whereas if you enjoy pottering about inshore, you may well enjoy operating a tiller. Tiller steering is more popular on small, open, displacement boats.

Q: I often find that using the servicing tool supplied with my reels to strip them down results in damaged screw heads, especially if corrosion has partially seized the screw. How do you service your reels?

BARRY BRETT, POOLE, DORSET

DL says: The tool supplied with the reel is at best 'adequate' for servicing reels. As salt starts to affect the thread, as it surely will, these often struggle to remove a screw without damaging the head. It is much better to use a screwdriver of the correct size for the screws you need to remove.



Q: I replaced an old fuel line but was unable to start the engine. A mechanic told me I had installed the priming bulb the wrong way around. Is this correct?

DAVID CAMPBELL, DUNFERMLINE, FIFE

DL says: In order to work efficiently, a priming bulb is fitted with a non-return valve, meaning fuel will only flow in one direction. An arrow moulded on to the bulb indicates the direction of flow, tank to engine.



Q: How do you know which trim setting to use on an outboard engine without power trim and tilt? My engine has a removable pin and a selection of five fixed position settings.

ADRIAN LONG, WEYMOUTH, DORSET

DL says: This is not a case of exact science really, but mostly it's a case of trial and error while on the water.

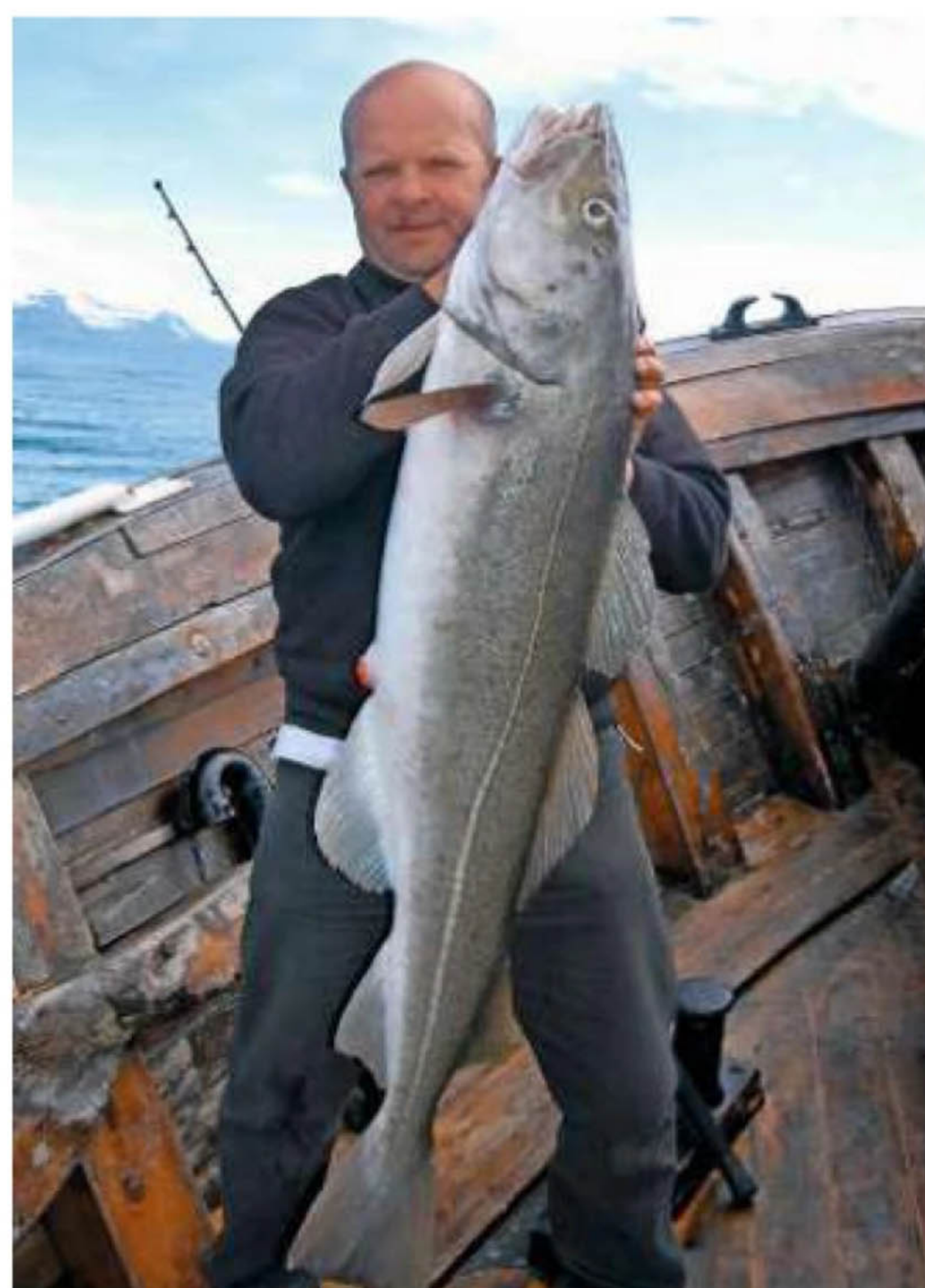
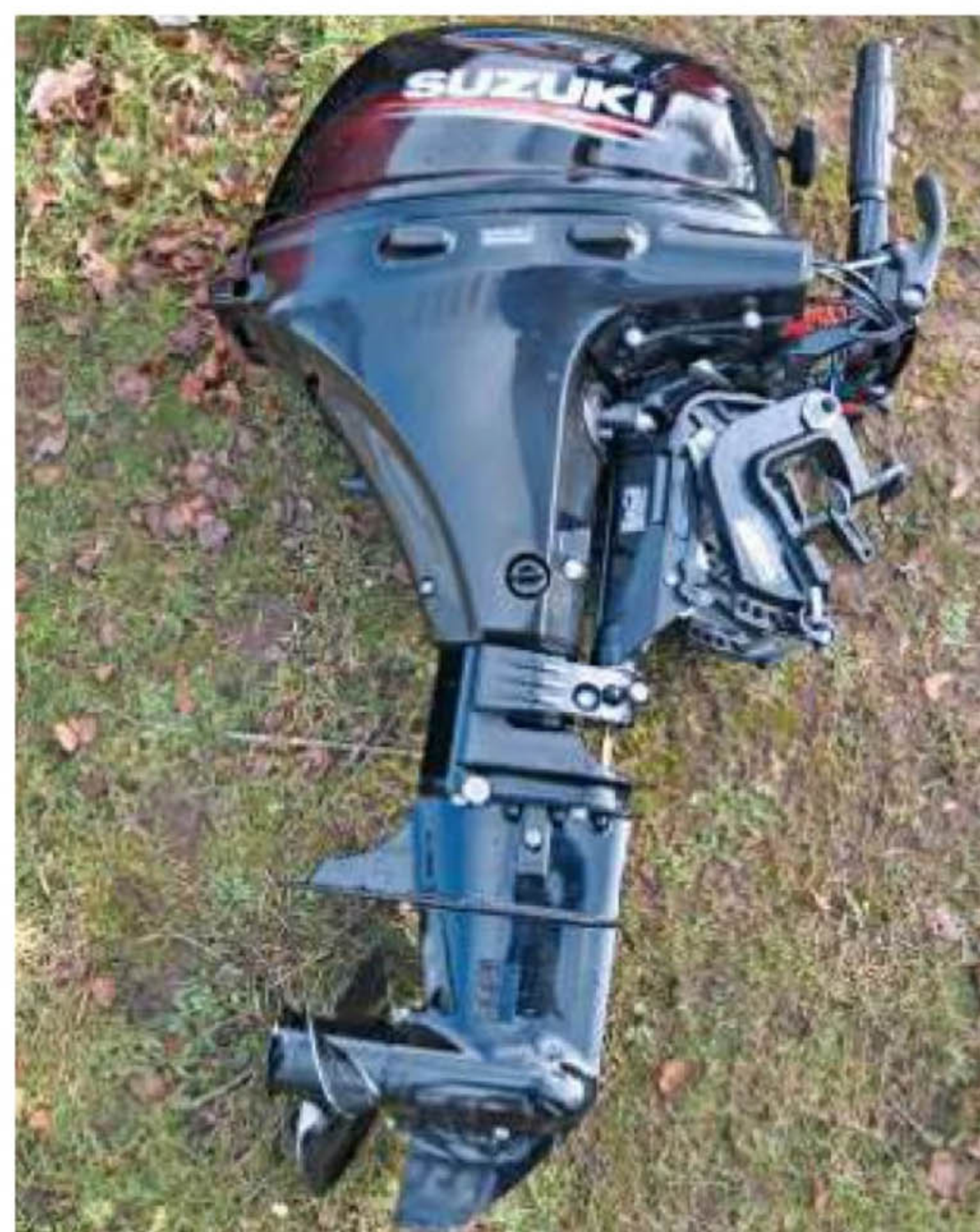
With the boat loaded as it would be for a day's fishing, experiment using the different fixed settings until you find the optimum, which will ensure the boat runs with a slight head-up attitude. Remember that the trim and tilt will need to be adjusted when taking the boat out of the water.



Q: Does putting a four-stroke outboard engine flat on its side cause any problems as a result of engine oil flowing to the top?

RUSSELL MARKHAM, DOWNHAM MARKET, NORFOLK

DL says: Portable four-stroke outboards have supports to indicate which side they should be laid on the floor. Incorrect storage will cause engine oil to leak out of the crank case, resulting in a mess and long-term damage if you fail to replace the lost oil before running the engine.



Q: What are skrei cod?

JOHN MORRIS, BRIDLINGTON, EAST YORKS

DL says: Biologically, skrei are exactly the same species of cod as those found elsewhere in the North Atlantic, but they spend much of the year feeding in the Barents Sea, off the northern coasts of Norway and Russia.

Between February and May, big shoals of skrei move inshore to spawn along the coast of Northern Norway, and these fish have a very large average size, typically between 20-60lb, with much bigger fish being caught each year. They are distinguished by their long, lean muscular profile.

Q: When using small casting jigs and a heavy shockleader, what is the best way to attach the lure to the leader?

ROGER THOMPSON, WARRINGTON, CHESHIRE

DL says: Casting jigs generally don't spin, so there is no real need to use a swivel. When using lighter line, say less than 25lb breaking strain, I generally use some sort of clip to attach the lure. With heavier leaders, I usually tie the jig directly using a loop, as shown.



Q: Is it essential to use a reel intended for use in saltwater when you are sea fishing?

MILES ALLGOOD, EASTBOURNE, E SUSSEX

DL says: Many fixed-spool reels are built for use in either fresh or saltwater, especially the smaller 3000-5000 size reels that are so popular with lure anglers.

Regardless of how much you spend on a reel, or a manufacturer's claims, if you do not thoroughly wash that reel with freshwater following each time it is used in saltwater, corrosion will eventually damage the reel.



Q&A

KAYAK

Q: I have been told by other kayakers that I should call the Coastguard to let them know if I am fishing and give them a paddle plan. What's the best way to do this?

JACK MITCHELL, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK

MC says: This has been a long-accepted practice and is a good idea, especially if you will be fishing at anchor (you look odd if not moving) or are going a long way offshore, in marginal conditions or at night.

I used to do this, but it's rare that I do now, for it has changed from a Coastguard station 10 miles away with local knowledge to one a long way away that is unlikely to know where I'm talking about.

Anyway, should you wish to do this, then the best way is by VHF radio. Call on Channel 16 and then switch to whichever one you are told to by the Coastguard to give further details.

It is also a good idea to have their telephone number programmed into your phone.

Q: I caught my anchor trolley with one of my lines and subsequently dropped my bait knife over the side while trying to sort it out. It got me thinking that I needed something a bit more suitable. Any ideas?

DANNY LATHAM, TIVERTON, DEVON

MC says: We've all been there – catching other lines, losing knives overboard and dropping fish.

Redundancy is the name of the game here, as is easy access.

I have my bait knife in with my bait for general use, but I have two line-cutting implements attached to my PFD.

One is a small, blunt-tipped, serrated knife with a rope cutter notch (no idea what brand) and the other is a hook-shaped line cutter made by Beaver.



I have one on each shoulder and have used both in times of necessity; both are great and stand up well to hard use.

I've just checked the Cornwall Canoes website and it stocks both.



Q: I saw on a forum about a free app called what3words that can pinpoint your location to a 3m x 3m square anywhere on Earth. Do you have any thoughts about this?

LEE WARBY, LEWES, EAST SUSSEX

MC says: I have read about this app and downloaded it to try. I was impressed with the concept. Assuming that the emergency services are aware of it, I see it as worth

having on your phone as an extra possibility.

However, kayak anglers are not on dry land. This doesn't make a difference in the app itself as far as I can tell, but the time we are most at risk, and therefore in need of calling out the emergency services, is if we are in the water.

None of my touchscreen smartphones have ever been of any use when I've tried to operate them with damp or wet hands, in or out of their case, so I can only see it being of limited use. Those instances would be if you can no longer paddle, or something like that, so I would not rely on it as my only source of safety equipment due to the limitations of my phone.



SEA SCHOOL

OUR EXPERTS SOLVE YOUR FISHING PROBLEMS

Q&A

LRF



Q: Should I be using a stop bead on a Caro/Texas rig to prevent the weight hitting the lure and pushing it up the hook?

PAUL DELANEY, NEWQUAY, CORNWALL

DS says: I don't use a stop unless I want to keep a big gap between the lure and weight. This is great for presentation, but can be awkward to cast.

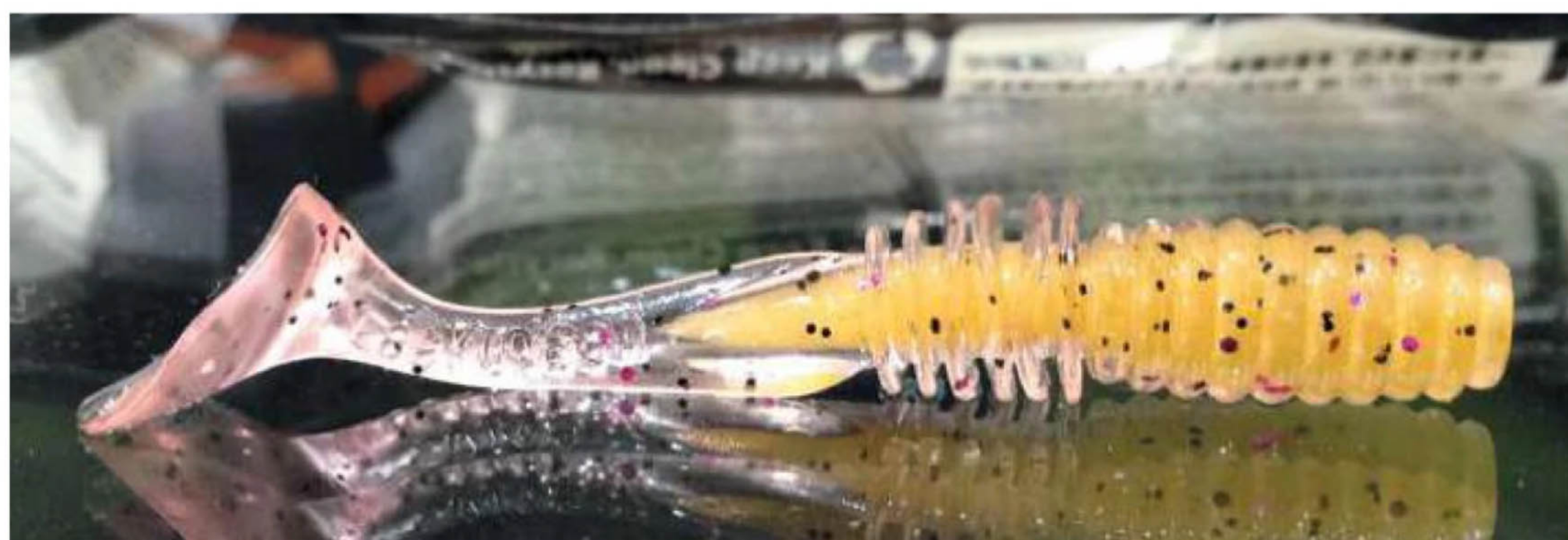
When fishing vertically, I prefer no stop bead or knot.

Q: As spring approaches I fancy fishing for plaice on a lure. I've had success in the past with baited spoons. Any advice on lure choice?

JOHN LILLEY, SWANAGE, DORSET

DS says: There is no better sight than a plaice coming up through the water in spring. My preferred approach is with a grub-type lure that's fished slowly across the bottom, just like working a spoon.

Plaice are naturally inquisitive and will follow lures right up to the boat. When they are under you, it is possible to catch taken them on dropshot as well.



Q: I like to fish under lights at night, but other than the trusted white and pink lures, I'd like to experiment a bit. What colours should I try?

PHIL WILSON, MORECAMBE, LANCS

DS says: Fishing under lights is as exciting as LRF gets for me. UV-coloured lures work well, as do the colours you mention. Try some two-tone lures to see if it makes something happen. The idea is a clear plastic is covering a smaller darker shade that can fool the fish into thinking a lure is smaller than it really is, but giving maximum action.



Q: Silly question but I have just upgraded to a quite expensive LRF rod, but I notice that, like other high-end rods, it doesn't have a hook clip. Would adding one damage the blank?

MORGAN SHARPE, TILBURY, ESSEX

DS says: I have used the after-market versions for years and have had no issue with the O-ring versions other than it wanders up the rod over time. These are much better than hooking into a guide and very inexpensive.

PENN Fathom II 15 SD CS Star Drag Casting Special Multiplier

Penn Fathom II Star Drag Casting Special is a high performance reel for the shore angler who is looking for a reel to cast the maximum distance whilst still having the power to handle big fish and tough conditions. With a distinctive 'Blackout' finish it's looks sleek, strong and mean.

PE1946

OUR PRICE

£195.99

CAPACITY	RATIO	WEIGHT
430m / 0.35mm	6.1:1	17.5oz



NEW

Dave Barham Sea Fishing Series

SALE

Over the years Dave Barham has helped to develop numerous ranges of rods and tackle for other companies, but has been unable to put his name to them due to his position as editor of Total Sea Fishing & Boat Fishing Monthly.

Now he's finally free to launch his own range of rods, with all manner of tackle, clothing and other kit in the pipeline. It's exciting to say the least.

CODE	LENGTH	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
TX4719	Boat	8ft 8	10-20lb	2	£179.99
TX4720	Beach	13ft 8	4-8oz	2	£179.99
TX4721	Travel	7ft	7-35g	4	£149.99
TX4722	Lure	9ft	10-40g	2	£89.99

NOW FROM

£40

IRONXPRO Rockfish LRF Rods

This sensitive rod can detect shy biting gobies in deep water yet has reserves of power to land bigger fish.

CODE	MODEL	PRICE
TX6238	Heavy 8ft 5-28g	£39.99
TX6237	Med. Heavy 8ft 5-20g	£37.99
TX4885	Medium Light 7ft 10 7-28g	£35.00
TX4886	Ultralight 6ft 11 0.5-7g	£30.00

PENN Squadron II Labrax Rods

Offering exceptional value for money, the PENN Squadron II series feature modern, two piece, sporting blank actions designed to achieve high performance in both fishing and casting.

RRP £49.99

OUR PRICE

£44.99

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	PCS
PE1827	7ft	10-30g	2
PE1828	8ft	14-42g	2

Shakespeare Agility Sea Tipster

Featuring a special supple tip section designed to maximise bite indication, this rod is ideal when targeting smaller species from boats, but still has the power in the mid section and butt to fight bigger fish when needed. Equally this rod is at home on the beach or inside estuaries fishing the margins for flounder, school bass and other small species.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
SP3844	11ft	30-120g	3	£99.99	£50.00
SP3845	14ft	120-240g	3	£104.99	£50.00

SUNLURE SW2 Bass Rods

- Carbon "Technifibre"
- EVA anti-shock knob
- High density EVA handle
- VSS type reel seat
- 2 equal sections
- SiC guides
- Cloth bag

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
SK1172	6ft 9	7-30g	2	£25.99	£22.00
SK1173	7ft 9	5-20g	2	£29.99	£25.00
SK1174	7ft 9	10-40g	2	£29.99	£27.00

SHIMANO STC Boat & Spin Rods

The STC Boat rods are the ultimate sea spinning rods and cater for both shore and boat fishing situations.

CODE	MODEL	LENGTH	CAP	PCS	PRICE
S12363	Spin	2.5m	14-40g	6	£159.99
S12364	Spin	2.5m	50-100g	6	£169.99
S12365	Shore Boat	3m	150-300g	4+2	£179.99
S12366	Powergame Boat	2-2.4m	150-300g	4+2	£194.99

DAIWA Gekkabijin Rods

Purpose built for the ever expanding LRF scene, the Gekkabijin rod range from Daiwa comes straight from their design houses in Japan, international home of Light Rock Fishing.

CODE	MODEL	CAP	RRP	PRICE
DW3984	7ft	0.5-5g	£149.99	£135.00
DW3985	7ft 6	0.5-5g	£159.99	£100.00

DAIWA Ninja FD Spinning Reels

Quite simply the Ninja reels are staggeringly good.

OUR PRICES FOR ONLY

£59.99

Abu Garcia Cardinal Saltwater Reels

Stainless steel components are matched with four high performance corrosion resistant bearings, couple this with serious winding power and you have the complete saltwater reel.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	PRICE
PU2599	174	0.28mm/190m	£36.99
PU2600	176	0.35mm/220m	£42.99
PU2601	177	0.35mm/300m	£49.99

OUR PRICES FROM ONLY

£36.99

Berkley Trilene Fluorocarbon



Highly sought after by bass pros in the States, Trilene Fluorocarbon is pound for pound among the strongest monofilament lines on the market. 110yds. Various breaking strains

ALL MODELS

OUR PRICE

£6.99

DAIWA J-Braid X8

The 8 strand weave results in very high circularity and a super smooth surface that contributes to longer casting distance as well as quieter line travel through the guides and on the reel.

RRP up to £109.99

FROM ONLY

£19.99



DAIWA J-Braid X4E - Dark Green

The story continues with the arrival of X4, four strand construction. Made in Japan. Full range available on our website!

RRP up to £24.99

FROM ONLY

£9.99

MITCHELL GT Pro Combo SURF

Great combos dedicated to beginners or anyone who wants try fishing. Simple, effective but well thought-out products to catch fish!

RRP: £59.99

OUR PRICE

£35

CODE	LENGTH	CASTS	PCS
PU6303	3.6m	50-150g	2
PU6304	3.9m	50-150g	3

MARUKYU Isome Worms

These supremely versatile worms are available in a range of colours and sizes, with their extremely lifelike bodies and action proving irresistible fished in a range of methods, from simple bait rigs, to fished with fine jigheads, to even being fished 'wacky' style hook in the middle.

Available in a range of colours and sizes, and come rigged with a single assist hook.

Full range available on our website!



BEST SELLER

ALL MODELS

FROM ONLY

£5.99

RON THOMPSON Explore Boat Combo

- Combo includes:
- 6ft 2pc Boat Rod 80-200g
 - Size 300 multiplier reel with line winder
 - Pre spooled 0.45mm nylon line
 - Quality lure box with 5x Norwegian swivel with snaps, 1x 100g Pilker and 1x Herring/Sibiki Rig (4 hooks)

SV10357

RRP: £69.99

£35

MITCHELL GT Pro Combo Spin



The best value for money! A great and complete assortment of combos dedicated to beginners or anyone who wants try fishing. Simple, effective but well thought-out products to catch fish!

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
PU5802	2.7m	15-40g	2	£39.99	£20.00
PU5803	2.4m	10-50g	Tele	£34.99	£18.00

HQ GO! BOX KITS



Everything you need to get started!

Get a 5 section tackle box and a selection of lures for your chosen method of fishing.

CODE	MODEL	NOW
TX3025	Dropshot	£14.99
TX3026	Mace	£7.99
TX3027	Excalibur	£5.00
TX3028	Bug	£3.00

ECOGEAR Pocket In Sets

The Ecogear Pocket In range is the perfect product for Light Rock Fishing (LRF) anglers and ultra light soft plastic fanatics alike. The Pocket In is a lightweight, discreet, convenient box of tricks to enable you to scale down and take your fishing anywhere.

CODE	MODEL	NOW
MR0140	Kasago	£13.99
MR0139	Aji	£13.99
MR0072	Mebaru	£13.99



SAVAGE GEAR 3D LINE THRU SANDEEL LURES

Savage Gear have carefully studied the swimming action and behaviour of the Sandeel in order to tweak the lure - and the result is incredible!

Available in a range of colours and sizes. Full range available on our website!

ALL MODELS FROM ONLY

£5.00



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FISHEAGLE 2pc Flotation Suit

Fantastic life preservation suit with top quality integrated buoyancy in both the jacket and trousers.

Features: Fully adjustable, Hood, waist, braces, hand and ankle cuffs, crotch strap.

Detachable Hood, Fleece lining body/hood and pockets with Safety Whistle, Double fold over pockets, Heavy Duty Double front Zip.

This suit has so many features, too many to list!



RRP £139.99

OUR PRICE

£99.99

BEST SELLER

IMAX 2pc Thermo Suit

If you are looking for a warm and waterproof suit but don't want a flotation suit then the Imax Thermo suit is well worth considering. It follows the classic jacket and bib & brace design. The outer shell is 100% water and wind proof and the high collar and detachable hood combine to keep the worst winter weather at bay.



RRP £129.99

OUR PRICE

£89.99

+ FREE BEANIE

IMAX ARX Thermo Clothing

- Durable lightweight rip-stop fabric, 100% polyester
- 100% waterproof TPU membrane of 8000mm and fully taped seams
- 160gsm thermal insulation for great warmth

Jacket

CODE	SIZE
SV20705	S
SV20706	M
SV20707	L
SV20708	XL
SV20709	2XL

RRP £89.99

OUR PRICE

£70

Bib & Brace

CODE	SIZE
SV20710	S
SV20711	M
SV20712	L
SV20713	XL
SV20714	2XL

RRP £79.99

OUR PRICE

£60

IRONXPRO Sea Suit

High quality thermal fishing suit to keep you warm, dry and protected on those cold nights on the beach.



RRP £144.99

OUR PRICE

£65

DAIWA D-Wave Bass Combo

Daiwa D-Wave Combos are designed to deliver an outstanding package of hardware to get you out fishing, at an unbeatable price.



DW8113

RRP £62.99

£45

Combo includes:

- D-Wave 11ft 1-3oz 2pc Rod
- D-Wave 5000B Reel with Mono

PENN Squadron II SW Spinning Rods

A modern design with advanced sporting performance, the Penn Squadron II SW Spin is a solid, durable and lightweight blank and packs plenty of casting power for saltwater lure fishing.

CODE	LENGTH	CASTS	PCS	NOW
PE1840	2.4m	75-150g	2	£66.99
PE1839	2.4m	50-100g	2	£66.99
PE1831	2.4m	15-40g	2	£55.99
PE1832	2.7m	20-50g	2	£55.99
PE1833	3m	20-60g	2	£61.99

Abu Garcia Multiplier Reels

For three generations and beyond, anglers the world over have put their trust in Abu Garcia for fishing tackle that stands their toughest tests. It's a trust that's been earned by building products right the first time, and making them even better time after time.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
A PU1513	6500C3 CT Mag	200m/0.40mm	£209.99	£120
B PU1823	6500 CT Chrome Rocket	200m/0.40mm	£229.99	£130
C PU10685	Ambassadeur 7000 LAX	576m/0.36mm	£149.99	£75
D PU1514	6500C3 CT	200m/0.40mm	£229.99	£138



Century Beach Rods

Tip Tornado Graphex Supermatch Beach
Probably one of the best all round shore rods Century has ever produced.

CODE	LGTH	MODEL	PRICE
CN0180	13ft 6	4-7oz	£499.00

Eliminator T900 Guide Rod

Features Century's STF (spread tow fabric) to improve AT-T anti-twist.

CODE	LGTH	MODEL	PRICE
CN0114	14ft 4	4-7oz	£549.00

Visit our website to see the full range!

IRONXPRO Apex Continental TT

Designed in a continental style, three-piece configuration, this is a "conti", with added brute force!

OUR PRICES FOR ONLY	CODE	LGTH	AFTM	PCS
£99.99	TX6224	13ft	100-250g	3
	TX6225	14ft	100-250g	3
	TX6226	15ft	100-250g	3

IRONXPRO Envoy 7000 FS Reel

Lightweight, powerful and reliable, the Envoy Fixed Spool from Tronixpro is the ideal partner for continental style surf rods, letting you cast to the horizon every time. Features a grippy rubberised handle, lightweight frame, infinite anti-reverse and a powerful drag that'll stop anything that swims. The high capacity spool is built to hold all line you'll need if your catch heads for the horizon.

CODE	CAPACITY
TX4268	20lb/230yd



SONIK Vader XS Shore Rods

Superb multi modulus carbon fibre two piece blanks with progressive casting action, with sensitive hi-vis tips for bite detection.

OUR PRICES FROM ONLY	CODE	MODEL	PRICE
£54.99	SO0622	13ft 2pc 4-6oz	£54.99
	SO0623	14ft 2pc 4-7oz	£64.99
	SO0624	15ft 3pc 4-7oz	£79.99

SONIK SKS Black Shore Rods

Each rod is individually tailored to offer the perfect 'all round' actions, which mean they are as effective on clean ground as they are in heavy terrain.

CODE	LGTH	MODEL	PCS	PRICE
SO0244	12ft	4-6oz	2	£79.99
SO0245	13ft	4-6oz	2	£89.99
SO0246	14ft	5-7oz	2	£99.99

PENN GS 525 MAG3 Series

- Latest version of the classic all round beach casting reel
- Upgraded graphite frame

CODE	CAPACITY
PE1875	15lb/280yd

PENN Surfblaster II Fixed Spool Reel

Ideal for all surf-casting situations over clean and mixed rough ground.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	PRICE
PE1777	7000	330yds/15lb	£109.99	£90.00
PE1778	8000	370yds/15lb	£114.99	£95.00

Shakespeare Ugly Stik GX2 Boat Rods

- Ugly Tech blank construction
- Long tip-Short butt design
- Ugly Stik's famous Clear Tip
- Laser etched EVA foregrip
- 2 piece construction

CODE	MODEL	RRP	NOW
SP3846	7ft4 8-12lb	£74.99	£70.00
SP3446	7ft9 12-20lb	£59.99	£55.00
SP3447	7ft6 20-30lb	£64.99	£60.00
SP3448	7ft4 30-50lb	£69.99	£65.00

PENN Warfare Combo

The PENN Warfare combo was engineered to be an extremely versatile all-round combo at an affordable price. It features a lightweight reel with graphite frame and sideplates in combination with a strong composite rod.

CODE	MODEL	RRP	NOW
PE1795	7ft 20 LW	£109.99	£90
PE1796	7ft 30 LW	£109.99	£100
PE1794	7ft 30 LW Left Hand	£109.99	£100

PENN Fierce III Reels

Featuring a full metal body and sideplate along with PENN HT-100™ carbon fiber drag washers, the Fierce III can handle anything inshore or nearshore.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RATIO	NOW
PE1953	2500	240yds/10lb	6.2:1	£79.99
PE1955	3000	250yds/15lb	6.2:1	£84.99
PE1956	4000	360yds/15lb	6.2:1	£89.99
PE1958	5000	420yds/20lb	5.6:1	£94.99
PE1959	6000	490yds/30lb	5.6:1	£99.99
PE1961	8000	475yds/50lb	5.3:1	£109.99

SHIMANO Speedmaster 14000 XSC

The new version of the 2015 Speecast, strongly updated in specs, features and appearance

SU14166	OUR PRICE	CAPACITY
	£120	8kg/400m

Leeda M-Sport Elite Beach Rods

The M-Sport Elite range is complete with new additions and improvements to the original M-Sport range. Key improvements on these rods are the Fuji components, glass tips, the compatibility to include a reducer, improved construction with carbon composite.

CODE	LGTH	CASTS	RRP	OUR PRICE
LD14559	13ft10	3.5-6oz	£209.99	£140
LD14560	13ft10	4-7oz		
LD14561	13ft10	4-8oz		

Leeda ICON FXD Sport Beach Rods

- Made from Torayco® carbon
- Fuji K Guides
- Fuji DPS reel seat
- Spliced Carbon hybrid tip
- Ergonomically designed Rubber grips

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	NOW
LD14563	13ft 10	80-180g	3	£269.99	£99.00
LD14564	16ft	80-180g	3	£279.99	£99.00

DAIWA Sealine Slos Multipliers

The SL20SH and SL30SH are two top drawer performers boasting powerful, high speed gearing.

RRP	OUR PRICE	CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY
£160.00	£79.99	DW0631	SL20SH	250m/20lbs
		DW0633	SL30SH	300m/20lbs

Abu Garcia Cardinal Salt Water Reels

Stainless steel components are matched with four high performance corrosion resistant bearings, couple this with serious winding power and you have the complete saltwater reel.

CODE	MODEL	CAPACITY	RRP	NOW
PU2599	174	0.28mm/190m	£47.99	£36.99
PU2600	176	0.35mm/220m	£49.99	£42.99
PU2601	177	0.35mm/300m	£59.99	£49.99

FIRST LOOK

Paul Fenech samples the latest gear to hit the tackle shops



TYPHOON CYCLONE HAT RRP: £24.95

This is a stylish peaked hat lined with a thermal fleece. It also features ear protector flaps and an adjustable chin strap.

■ For more info or to locate your nearest stockist, tel: 01642 486104.
Web: www.typhoon-int.co.uk

RIDGEMONKEY HEADLIGHTS AND CASES

RRP: £34.99, £49.99, CASE: £9.99

Two headlights that are robust and lightweight and perfect for a night session on the beach or afloat.

The VRH150 offers dual colours of white or green, with five settings to choose from. Maximum run time on 160 lumens is up to 80 hours.

The VRH300 is virtually the same, but with a brighter output of 200 lumens and

a maximum run time of around 90 hours.

The Gorilla Box Tech Case 75 is also available to store your headlight safely. Weather-resistant with a hard shell, it features a soft-lined inner, chunky zip and an integral cable storage pouch.

■ For your nearest Ridgemonkey stockist, visit: www.ridgemonkey.co.uk



COX & RAWLE QUICKLINK CLIP

RRP: £2.75 PER PACK OF 15

The Cox & Rawle brand of terminal tackle has long been admired by anglers all over the world for its supreme quality.

These incredibly strong and reliable link clips can be used for attaching lead weights or rigs at the end of your mainline and shockleader in a flash.

Available in sizes small, medium and large.

■ For your nearest Cox & Rawle stockist, tel: 01963 31623.
Web: www.fishingmatters.biz

PENN WRATH 8000 FIXED-SPOOL REEL RRP: £54.99

If you're one of those shore anglers who has made the switch to using a fixed-spool reel with braid, you need to take a look at this.

It's not the lightest reel in the world, but it's definitely built to withstand the rigours of everyday shore angling – especially over rough ground.

Features a corrosion-resistant graphite body, aluminium spool, large deep spool and a solid cranking handle.

Overall, it's an awful lot of reel for not a lot of cash.

SPECIFICATIONS

- RATIO: 5.3:1
- CAPACITY: 340yd/20lb mono; 475yd/50lb braid
- BEARINGS: Three stainless-steel
- SPOOL: Aluminium
- BODY: Corrosion-resistant graphite

■ Available from all Penn stockists, tel: 01665 602771.
Web: www.penn-fishing.co.uk



SIDEWINDER VELCRO ROD HOLDER £3.99

Ideal for securing your rod to a boat rail or pier railing. Simply attach it and secure the strap over the blank, then fasten using the Velcro attachments.

■ To locate a stockist, tel: 01803 201326. Web: www.kiddywholesale.co.uk



STORM COASTAL 360GT BISCAY WEEDLESS SHAD RRP: £8.99

These weedless lures have become extremely popular among predator anglers, especially those who target bass.

The swim-action is as near as perfect to the real thing as you would expect, while the supple body is fixed to the head by a free-swinging screw. The super-sharp VMC hooks rest perfectly hidden inside the weedless channel system.

Available in two sizes of 12cm and 14cm and weights of 40g and 60g.

■ For your nearest Storm stockist, contact Normark UK, tel: 08444 068939. Web: www.normarkuk.com



RODS RACING FOR POLE POSITION

FERRARI SCUDERIA

RRP: £129.99

Equipped with a massive amount of power, designed for performing powerful casting styles. Boasting an incredible 250g rating, as well as Fuji low-rider guides, it's a rod that will certainly be at home on a UK beach.

FERRARI MODENA

RRP: £119.99

Another 250g-rated rod that includes genuine Fuji low-rider guides that are perfect when you opt to use braided mainline.

Also featuring a hybrid tip section, it's designed for powerful casting.

FERRARI PISTA

RRP: £179.99

The leader of the pack with a 300g rating, it packs a real punch too. Featuring Fuji low-rider guides and a hybrid tip, this is a go anywhere rod, especially with braided mainline.

"With a 300g rating, it packs a real punch."

THE FISHING MEGASTORE, based in Glasgow and Edinburgh, is introducing a new range of Continental-style, three-piece 4.2m (14ft) shore rods from Fishing Ferrari.

Initially, there are six models to choose from and they really look the part. These rods are competitively priced to suit most budgets and come equipped with top-quality components and cosmetics, with UFR (ultra fast reaction) blanks.

Sea Angler has managed to get the full range and will be showing them in action in a future issue.



FERRARI IMOLA RRP: £99.99

Offering a huge casting rating of 230g, this outfit is super-powerful and lined with low-rider guides. Other features include Power Store and Energy Control, along with a hybrid tip section for superior casting and sensitivity.

“Super-powerful and lined with low-rider guides”

FERRARI FORMULA RRP: £79.99

Rated to cast loads up to 220g, this hi-modulus carbon blank features low-rider guides. It's a powerful outfit that is capable of powerful casting.

FERRARI MONZA RRP: £109.99

This classy outfit boasts an incredibly lightweight feel, but with a huge amount of power. With low-rider guides, 250g rating and a hybrid tip, this rod is ready for long distance casting.

“Incredibly lightweight feel, but with power within”

FISHING
MEGASTORE.COM

■ For more info on the full Ferrari range of rods, tel: 0141 212 8880.
Web: www.fishingmegastore.com

Black gold

Contributor
Dave Barham
explains
why he uses
Daiwa Saltist
BG reels
for his
boat fishing



REMEMBER REVIEWING THE DAIWA SALTIST BG20H back in 2013 when it first hit the shops. I've been using that reel ever since for much of my UK boat fishing, and only last year I purchased another one to give me a matching pair for my uptiding exploits.

One of the things I really like about these reels is the star-drag system, which provides a massive range of setting choices. I do a lot of big bait fishing for large fish, such as livebaiting for bass or tope. For this it's essential to have a reel with a smooth drag/ratchet system. This allows me to back off the drag in tiny increments, so it just holds the line on the spool. It means the pull of the tide is not strong enough to take line, but the slightest pull from a big fish allows line to peel off the reel against the drag.

Tope and bass are particularly sensitive to feeling resistance, and if there's too much at the boat end they'll often drop the bait and you'll end up with an aborted take.

Likewise, the line has to come off the spool smoothly when a fish is taking line, especially if you're using braid mainline. Daiwa's Ultimate Tournament Drag system (UTD) is just the job and, combined with the star-drag wheel, I can increase or decrease drag pressure in an instant during the fight, and the line will still peel away nice and smoothly – no juddering or stop-starting.

Video review:
[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=d6d-
gK6skaE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6d-gK6skaE)



The BG20H being put through it's paces with a big smoothhound off Holyhead



A 23lb 8oz of hard-fighting hound – testament to the smooth and powerful drag system

QUALITY PRODUCT

I've never taken the side plate off the original reel I bought seven years ago, but apparently there are brake blocks in there to help with casting. I use my reel with 30lb braid as standard for pretty much all my boat fishing – from working lures for cod and pollack in 200ft of water to casting half a mackerel off the stern for tope and blonde rays – and I've never had a problem with over runs.

Two years ago, I slapped the reel on a rod for review in Sea Angler and I ended up catching my second-largest smoothhound, weighing a mighty 23lb 8oz. Again, the BG20H coped admirably with that fish, as it has done previously and since.

The fact that I abuse my gear is testament to the quality of manufacture. I think I've washed the BG20H down maybe a dozen times with fresh water in seven years, and it's working as good as it did out of the box, albeit with minor signs of corrosion on the outside.

The gears are particularly rugged. Being machined from hard alloy, they're light yet tough. I've cranked up 50lb tope, 70lb conger eels and countless big blonde rays with this reel. I think you'd really have to go some to

strip the gearing out in one of these reels.

As with most Daiwa kit, these reels are extremely well manufactured. Built on the legendary Saltist one-piece alloy frame with an anodised finish to help prevent corrosion, you can tell you've bought quality the instant you take it out of the box.

I love the power handle. It's rugged and designed to take a lot of punishment, and the oval-shaped handle grip sits well in your hand. It can be removed and repositioned to give more 'power' if required, basically making it slightly longer. I've never found the need to do this.

The spool release lever is chunky too, and operates with a firm, positive click (on and off) to release the spool or re-engage it. A loud ratchet completes the set-up. It's a very good, all-round reel to have in your armoury.

FAMOUS FIVE

There are currently five reels in the BG family, including the normal 20, 30, 40 and 50lb-class models, but I must make special mention of the 35H. This is an in-between with a slightly narrower spool than the 40H which, coupled with the super-fast 6.4:1

retrieve ratio, sets it up nicely as a jigging reel.

If you're thinking of having a bash at some giant trevallies or amberjacks abroad with speed jigs, then the BG35H is going to do the job. It will also sit better on some of the more modern slimmer rod blanks and help to eliminate wobble when retrieving.

I can highly recommend both the 20H and 30H to cover most UK boat fishing situations, with the larger models well suited to bigger species such as sharks, skate and monster eels.

■ For more details on the range, visit: www.daiwasports.co.uk

FEATURES AT A GLANCE

- Aluminium one-piece frame and side plate
- Protective anodised finish
- UTD - Ultimate Tournament Drag
- Dual position power handle
- Centrifugal anti-backlash control
- Spool ratchet
- 4CRBB +1 bearings
- Powerful high strength alloy gears
- Machined aluminium spool



I have put this reel through some serious punishment over the years

THE RANGE

MODEL	RATIO	WEIGHT	CAPACITY	PRICE
STTBG20H	6.1:1	16.5oz	370m x 12lb	£260
STTBG30H	6.1:1	20.9oz	450m x 14lb	£265
STTBG35H	6.4:1	23.3oz	370m x 25lb	£270
STTBG40H	6.4:1	24.3oz	320m x 30lb	£275
STTBG50H	6.4:1	25oz	370m x 25lb	£280

Get this superb boat outfit for just £30!

Take advantage of this early spring boat package, saving you £40!



SPRING generally heralds the start of the charter boat season, but if you have minimal or no boat fishing tackle, it may prevent you from booking an early season day afloat.

Of course, most charter skippers will hire out tackle for a trip, but wouldn't it be so good to have your own, tucked away in the boot of the car for such an occasion?

This latest deal is absolutely perfect when you decide to get offshore and enjoy some action without breaking the bank.

First up is the Ron Thompson combo kit. In it you'll find a two-piece, 6ft rod rated to 20-30lb, together with an accompanying multiplier reel, fitted with a level-wind and

already loaded with mono. In addition, there's a box of swivel connecting links and a 100g pirk. Rounding off the deal is a rig wallet stuffed with 10 assorted feather rigs to get you on your way. Inside you'll find two each of Daylites, Tinsel Flasha, Reflector, Hokkai and Mackerel sets.

Normally, this lot would set you back £69.99 in the shops, but it can be yours today for just £30 – a deal you cannot afford to miss as it puts a cool £39.99 back into your pocket!

Ordering couldn't be easier – we've created three easy ways (below). Give the helpful staff at the Fishing Megastore a call, place your order and leave the rest to them and kick off your spring season in style.

**SAVE
£40!**

*£6.99 post and packing,
UK mainland only.
Email for overseas rates



THREE EASY WAYS TO ORDER

1. LOG ON to the link gac.fishing/00163SA

2. CALL 0141 212 8880 and quote 00163SA

3. BY POST Glasgow Angling Centre, Unit 1,
29 Saracen ST, Glasgow G22 5HT and quote 00163SA

*Please make cheques payable to 'Glasgow Angling Centre Ltd'.

(*£6.99 P&P)

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DEALS LOG ON TO
www.seaangler.co.uk
TODAY!

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ALL ORDERS OVER
£50 NOW POST FREE!

POST & PACKING



Small items
£4.00
(not guaranteed
next day)

Reels & standard
items £6.00

Rods & larger
items £8.00
2 working days

**ORDERS OVER £50
ARE POST FREE**

SHAKESPEARE K2 BLACK EXTREME TWIN TIP SURF ROD

K2 Black Extreme Twin Tip Surf Rods are unrivaled casting machines with twin tip options designed specially for long distance casting. Available in two sizes.



14FT9
OUR PRICE
£94.99
rrp £189.99

15FT9
OUR PRICE
£94.99
rrp £189.99

Daiwa Tournament Surf Rods

12FT 6 MULTI OUR PRICE £261.00 rrp £290.00	13FT 6 MULTI OUR PRICE £283.50 rrp £315.00	14FT FIXED OUR PRICE £247.50 rrp £275.00
14FT 2 MULTI OUR PRICE £306.00 rrp £340.00	16FT FIXED OUR PRICE £283.50 rrp £315.00	

Daiwa Air Surf Rods

13FT 6 MULTI OUR PRICE £400.00 rrp £450.00	14FT 2 MULTI OUR PRICE £425.00 rrp £475.00	15FT 3 FIXED OUR PRICE £450.00 rrp £500.00
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Daiwa Tournament Hybrid Tip (HT) Surf Rods

14FT FIXED OUR PRICE £270.00 rrp £300.00	15FT FIXED OUR PRICE £283.50 rrp £315.00
--	--

DAIWA EMBLEM SURF 45 SCW QUICK DRAG REEL

An ideal choice for the discerning beach angler who seeks a high performance fixed spool for both braid and monofil.



OUR PRICE
£149.99
rrp £174.99

SONIK VADER XS SHORE RODS

The Vader XS Shore Rods represent fantastic value for money, with features and quality materials normally reserved for rods with a higher price point.

Available in a two piece 13ft model or a three piece 15ft model.

13FT
OUR PRICE
£49.49
rrp £54.99

15FT
OUR PRICE
£71.99
rrp £84.99

PENN MULTIPLIER REELS

The 515 and 525 Mag 3 is latest version of this best selling multiplier and among the improved features now boasts eye catching red cosmetics.



515 MAG3
OUR PRICE
£115.99
rrp £154.99

525 MAG3
OUR PRICE
£122.99
rrp £164.99

DAIWA SAS MK7 2-PIECE FLOTATION SUIT

Offering superior value, the Daiwa SAS Mk7 2 Piece Flotation Suit is the biggest selling flotation suit in Europe, being totally waterproof with a 5000mm hydrostatic head rating.



OUR PRICE
£109.99
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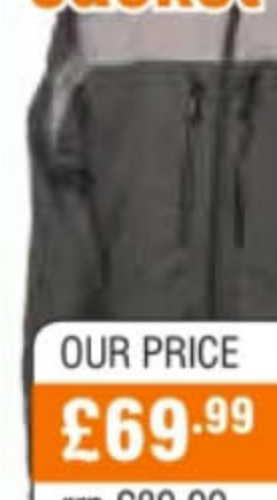
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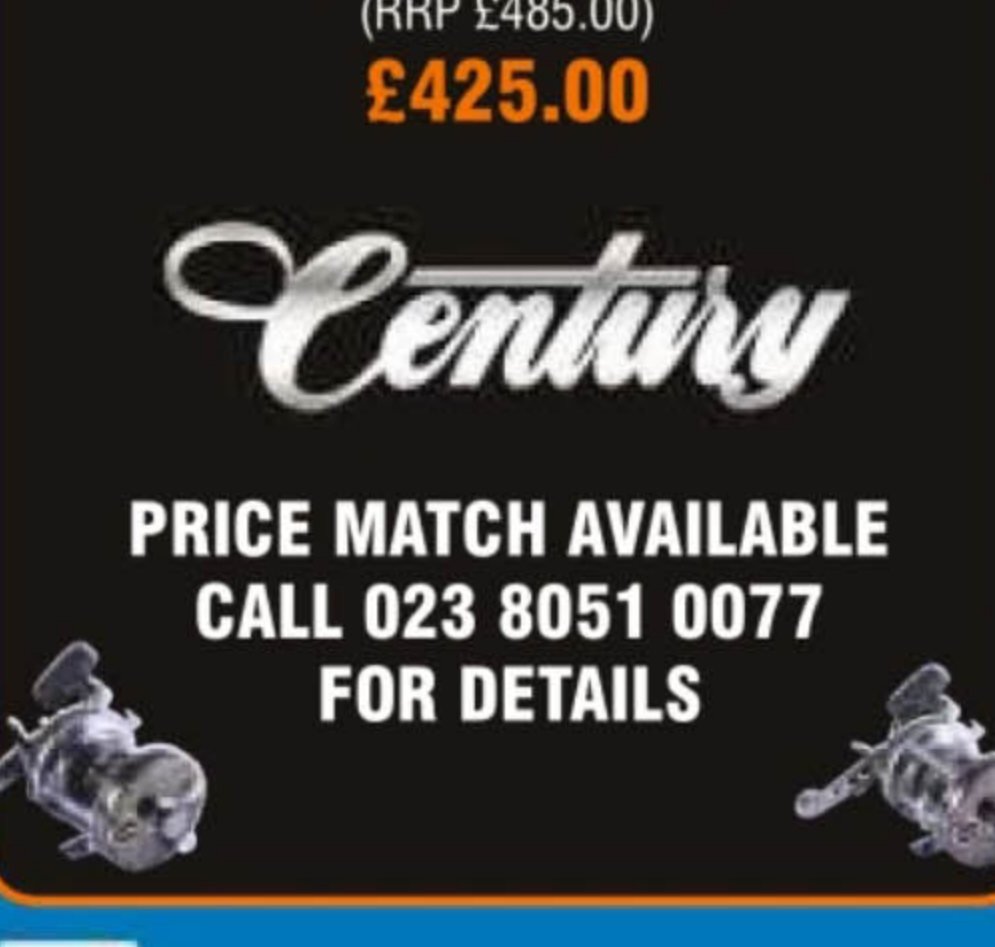
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Fun time fishing

Dave Lewis samples a simple and basic vessel for a variety of angling opportunities



The SIB is easily carried to the water's edge by two persons





A Suzuki 6hp engine was fitted to the review boat



The bare boat weighs just 55kg



SMALL INFLATABLE BOATS, KNOWN AS SIBs, are growing in popularity due to their light weight, affordability, stability and the fact they are highly practical inshore fishing vessels.

SIBs really are perfect for the angler who doesn't want the commitment of running a trailerable fishing boat because they are absolutely perfect for launching single-handed, almost anywhere. Certainly, when operated sensibly, a SIB can open up a whole world of hugely productive angling opportunities.

The Vanguard XHD 335 is one of a large range of SIBs marketed by Excel Boats. Being tough and with a durable sectioned, aluminium deck, the vessel is constructed from professional grade Hytex fabric, and carries a five-year warranty on fabric and construction. The deflated boat packs neatly into two storage bags.

SIBs are simple and as basic as it gets, which for many boaters forms a large part of their appeal. Features of note include a high-pressure keel for maximum rigidity, a bow handle, along with additional carrying handles, and tough rubber fendering for protection when coming alongside.

This model, which is available in light grey, navy blue, red and dark grey, features a sectioned aluminium deck that helps to give the boat a rugged feel. As standard, this version is supplied with two adjustable thwarts, oars and oar locks. You also get a painter rope, self-bailer and a carrying bag, along with an inflation hand pump and a repair kit.

Overall length is 3.35 metres (nearly 11ft), with an inside length of 2.31m (7ft 7in), with an overall beam of 1.64m (5ft 4in) and inside beam of 0.80m (about 2ft 7in). Tube diameters are 0.42m (1ft 4in), and conform to a 3+1 configuration. The bare boat weighs 55kg (121lb), and is rated for carrying a maximum load of 680kg (just under 1,500lb).

Certificated as CE category C, the vessel is rated for outboard engines up to a maximum of 15hp, or 50kg (110lb).

ON THE WATER

If you have never experienced a ride aboard an SIB, perhaps it's time you did. These remarkable little craft are incredibly stable.

The material used to manufacture the tubes (sponsons) is incredibly tough, and



Aluminium deck gives a feeling of durability

is constructed with three independent air chambers to form the full sponson. A fourth independent air chamber is incorporated within the hull. Therefore, contrary to popular belief, one prick from a sharp hook point is not going to result in a rapid deflation.

The aluminium deck of the Vanguard XHD 335 gives this SIB a distinct feeling of durability, along with increased overall rigidity.

The review boat was fitted with a Suzuki 6hp engine, which produced adequate performances. I suspect most sea anglers would appreciate the additional thrust of a larger engine up to the 15hp maximum, especially those who typically fish in areas subjected to strong tides, or regularly run long distances.

I travelled to the Midlands for a demonstration on a large reservoir. Once inflated, the SIB is easily manhandled to the water's edge by two persons, then rigged and made ready. On the day, a very strong wind had created a lively chop on the water, which were reasonable conditions to help get an overall feel of the boat.

Giving the blustery conditions, I appreciated the triangular skirts fitted outboard between the transom and aft sections of each sponson. These did their job of deflecting water and spray from being blown inboard.

This is an impressive little angling boat, which is perfect for one person, and well worth a look if you are interested in getting into this mobile and exciting form of boat angling. ■

INFORMATION

The RRP for an Excel Vanguard XHD 335 is £939. For information, contact Terry Wright at Excel Boats, tel: 01213 232333. Web: www.excel-boats.co.uk or www.meridian-marine.co.uk



The Excel Vanguard XHD 335 is an impressive little angling boat and perfect for one angler

BOAT STORE

A guide to new products for anglers going afloat

ADVANCED TILLER CONTROL

This new tiller handle from Mercury allows the user to comfortably operate the engine regardless of driving hand preference, and provides precise trolling speeds in 10rpm increments.

The 40-115hp Tiller is the only one on the market with the capability not only to swap the shift handle to either side of the tiller, but also to reverse the throttle grip rotation.

It has side-to-side adjustments up to 18 degrees port and starboard from the centre. Likewise, you can adjust the handle's vertical angle too. These adjustments, along with the design of other touch points and controls, provide the most customisable steering and throttle controls that adjust to the your

body proportions and positioning.

It comes standard with Mercury Troll Control, so you can dial in precise trolling speeds to increase or decrease speed in 10rpm increments. You also get an integrated display giving warnings for engine oil, temperature, electrical and other lesser faults, or if the driver's safety lanyard becomes disconnected.

Sold separately is a heated grip for cold-weather conditions.

Mercury's 40-115hp Tiller is compatible with the 40-60hp EFI four-stroke family of engines built since 2006, and the 80-115hp EFI four stroke family of engines built since 2014.

■ For more info, visit: www.barrus.co.uk



INFLATABLES GET A NEW LOOK

Yamaha has redesigned its YAM inflatable boat range with a fresh, modern look and a wide range of features.

Combining high quality with great value for money, the YAM range consists of the

T-series (Tenders), S-series (Sport) and the STi-series (Sport Tenders). The TA Aluminium RIB series retains its existing design.

The T Series consists of tough yet slim runabouts, being ideal for small-boat tender duties.

The Sport inflatables are perfect for water sports and feature a sturdy aluminium

panel floor and an inflatable keel.

The Sport Tenders are a combination of fun, flexibility and durability. The inflatable keel and V-hull design of the 310 STi-V gives this boat excellent control and handling stability. Their PVC-coated transom is reinforced with a support section for a Yamaha outboard.

■ More info at: www.yamaha-motor.eu

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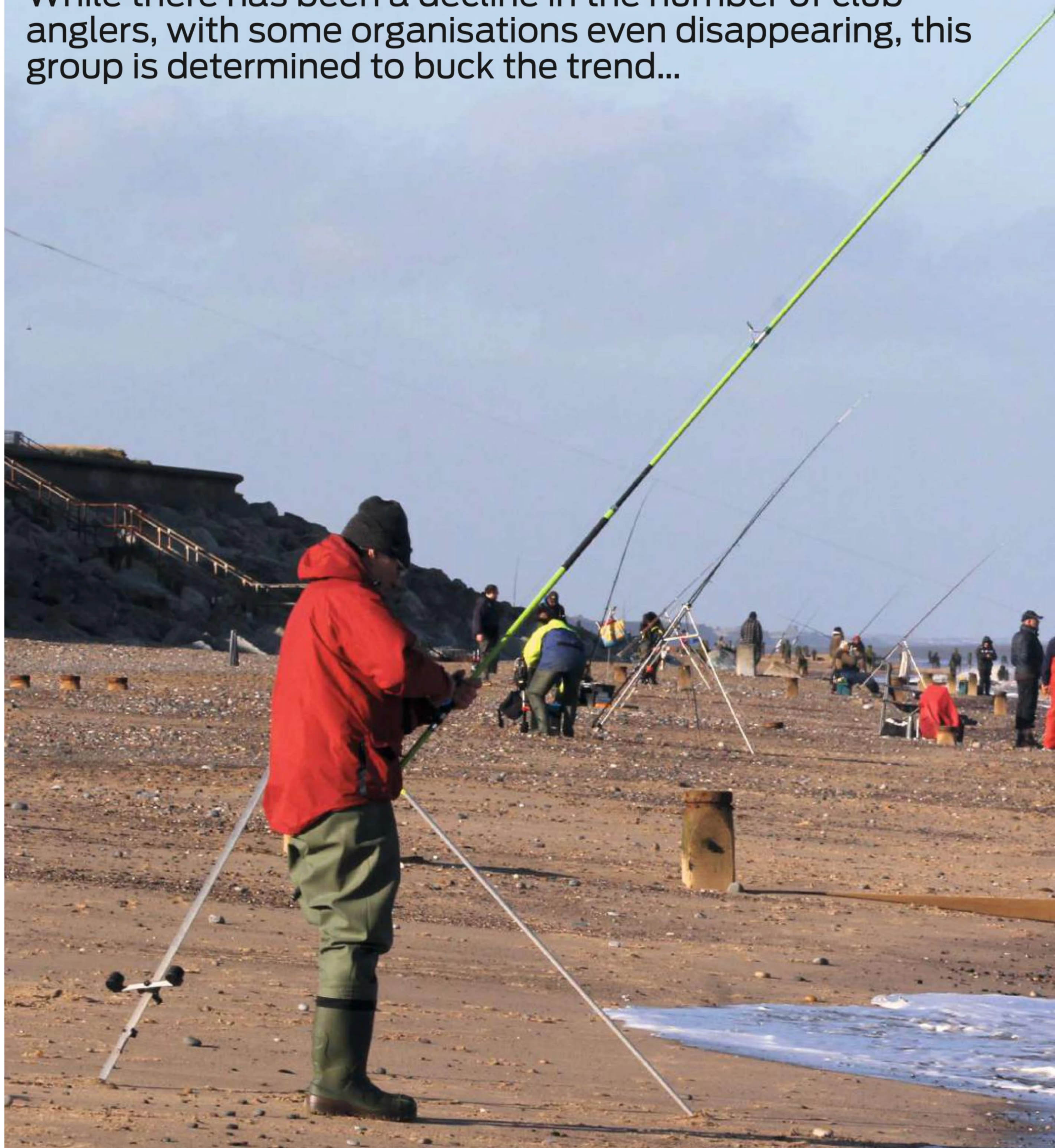
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Join the club!

While there has been a decline in the number of club anglers, with some organisations even disappearing, this group is determined to buck the trend...



AS A LAD, AND APPROACHING my teens, weekends were pretty much full on and I was always kept busy. I can vividly remember back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, how much I really looked forward to my weekly club fishing events.

Saturday mornings, though, were always an early start for me, with my dad taking me to play football for the school team. I was a number seven, a right winger and quite nippy with the ball too. Many a goal was headed home as I skilfully swerved a few innocuous challenges and sent in a searching cross, inevitably always finding our

tall-for-his-age centre half. A towering five-footer at nine-years-old was certainly an advantage.

However, Sunday was definitely the most important day of the week for me...this was the day I got to go fishing.

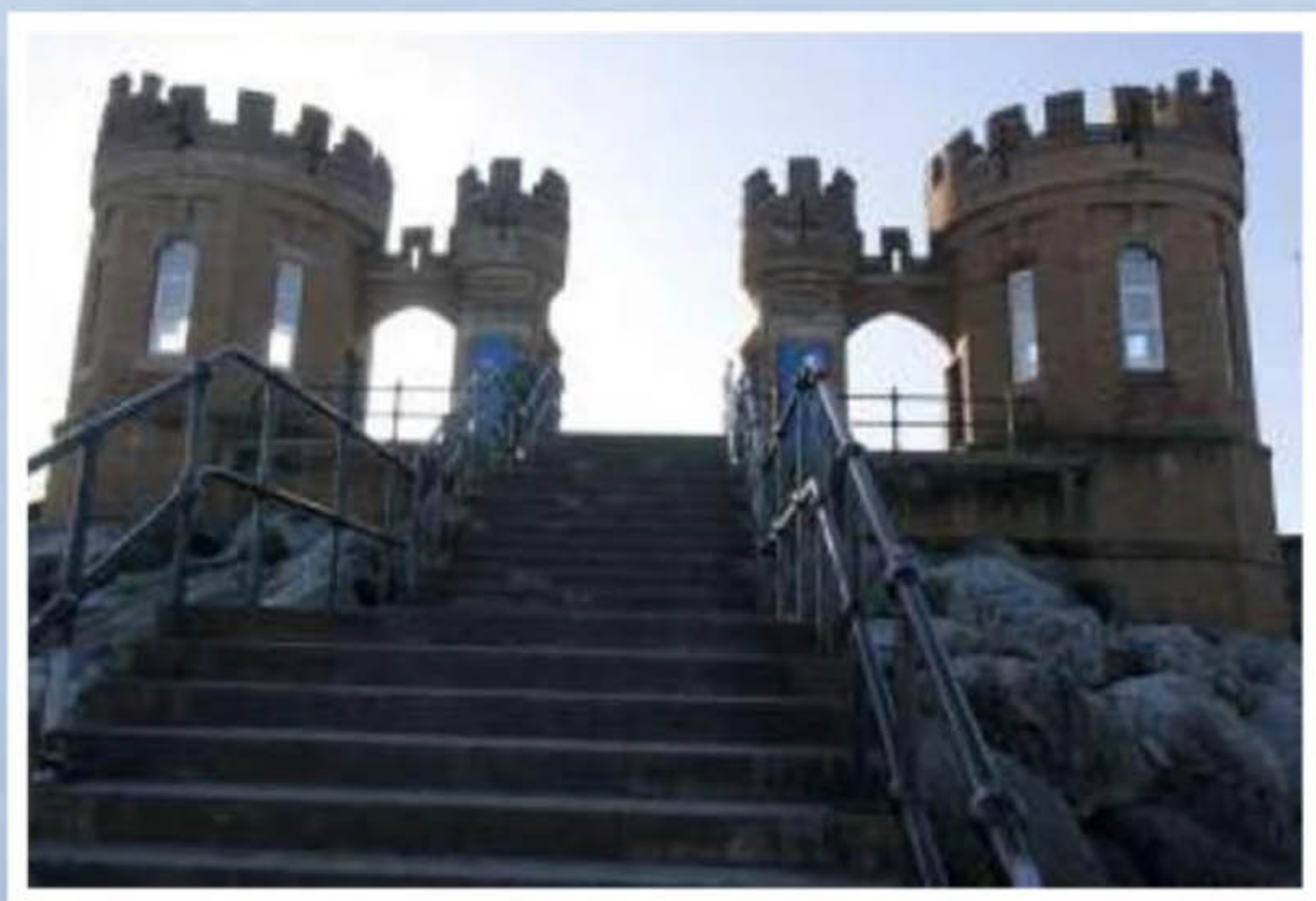
Growing up in the North East, club fishing was incredibly popular back then. There must have easily been at least six fishing clubs in Sunderland alone – and even more north of the Tyne. In fact, club fishing was at its peak nationwide.

My club was Sunderland Shipbuilders SAC and, as the name suggests, it was put together by a group of anglers who all worked in the local shipyards on the River Wear. With around 150 members

– 30 or so of which were juniors too – it wasn't just a day of competition, but a chance to meet up and have a good social.

When you think about it, many more clubs up and down the UK were doing exactly the same. Just imagine how many more thousands of anglers nationally would actually have been fishing on that day too.

Fast-forward 40 years, though, and things aren't quite the same. Famous angling clubs that regularly saw turnouts of hundreds of members are now lucky if they see a dozen turning up. I recently heard of a Tyneside club having just six anglers fishing its event...sadly some clubs are no longer in action. ►



The twin towers at Withernsea beach



Ian Beach with his 2lb 2oz codling



Whiting for Keith Mumby



CLOSE TO COLLAPSING

One organisation that has felt the effect of dwindling attendances, but still remains determined to forge ahead, is the Yorkshire Federation of Sea Anglers.

Originally, it was part of the National Federation of Sea Anglers, but in 1974 two of its members, Robert Smithson and John Amery, made the decision to break free from the NFSA, opting to go it alone.

With their base at the Bay Horse pub in Tadcaster, North Yorkshire, it wasn't long before other clubs in the surrounding areas soon joined them. These included the Carnival Club at Barton-upon-Humber, as well as others at Harrogate, Bridlington, Humberside Fire Brigade and the Pennine Pirates, who all decided to come together under the Yorkshire FSA umbrella.

The 'fed' ploughed on successfully – that was until three years ago. With interest waning, it was perilously close to collapsing. Things looked bleak, until Keith Mumby, Harry Brown and a few other members, rescued it from the brink of collapse.

With a few tweaks to how the federation

operated, it was resurrected with a new ethos of turning it into an easy going and friendly group, where anglers of all abilities would fish suitable venues.

One major change included altering the competition day. Instead of fishing on a Sunday, it was decided Saturdays were more convenient, especially for those who needed to travel a fair distance. In addition, it gave those who wanted to fish major open events the opportunity to do so.

TURNOUTS VARY

Nowadays, the Yorkshire FSA attracts turnouts varying in numbers between nine and 20 anglers. They fish eight matches between October and March on a variety of venues along the Holderness Coast.

Its latest match, which was also open to non-members, took place at Withernsea, just 24 hours before Storm Ciara was due to hit the UK. Conditions were calm, with a hint of colour in the water, and with a turnout of 12 members, they were hopeful of a fish or two.

From the off, good whiting up to a very

acceptable 40cm were being landed in decent numbers. That meant most of them switched to tiny baits and multi-hook rigs.

Ian Beach, from Scunthorpe, livened things up a bit when he landed a good 46cm codling to a lug and squid bait on a clipped Pennell rig.

When the tide crept further up the beach, the whiting showed no signs of relenting and continued to feed.

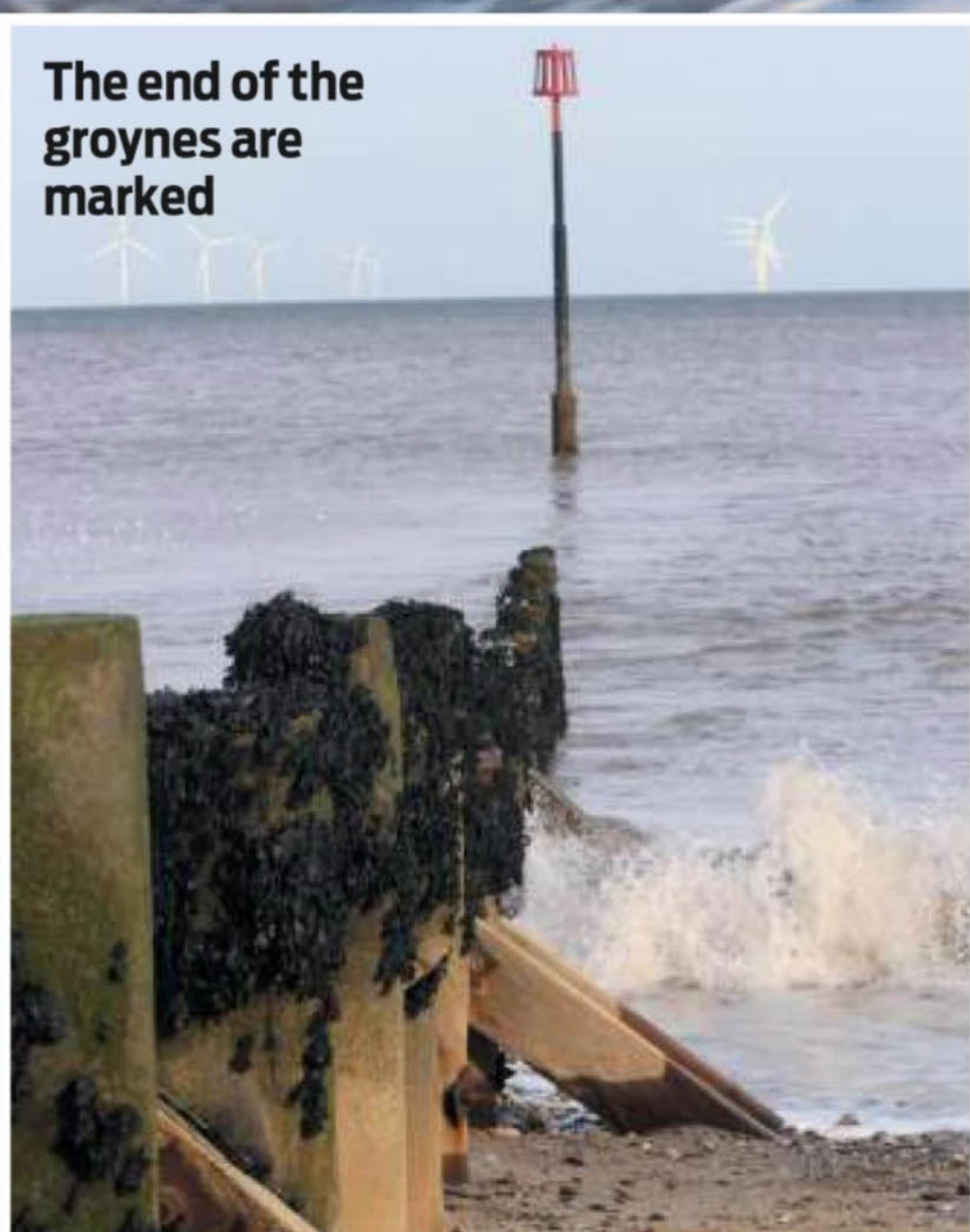
As the match neared its finish, positions were tight at the top. At the death, it was Grimsby angler and organiser Keith Mumby who beached a plump 45cm codling to ultimately seal the victory.

RESULT

Yorkshire FSA Open, Withernsea

East Yorkshire: 1 Keith Mumby, 12 fish, 10lb 2oz 8dr; 2 Michael Suddaby, 14, 8lb 9oz 12dr; 3 Paul Scott, 12, 7lb 2oz 4dr; 4 Ian Beach, 5, 5lb 4oz 8dr; 5 Graham Dyas, 3, 2lb 2oz. Heaviest round fish: Ian Beach, 2lb 2oz codling. Heaviest Flatfish: Keith Hodgson, 4oz 8dr dab. See page 108 for Penn Sea League points. ■

The end of the groynes are marked



Withernsea beach is a popular venue





***“Keith Mumby
beached a plump
45cm codling to seal
the victory”***



SEA LEAGUE

The latest results from Britain's biggest event for shore match anglers

PENN PLUS

JOCK GOUDIE INTERNATIONAL MASTERS

Salthouse and Kelling, North Norfolk, 126 anglers

Three anglers finished this two-day event with the same points after a zone win and a second, but it was Penn Sea League 2019 champion Henry Randell who edged it on weight points.

The England angler caught 59 fish for 583 points compared to Chris Spall's 64 fish for 540 points and Dave Shorthouse's 58 fish and 499 points.

Henry won zone D at Kelling from peg 65 on day 1 with 45 fish and 376 points, and on day 2 was second in zone B at Salthouse from peg 31, where he caught 14 fish for 207 points.

Chris was second from end peg 1 in zone A (Salthouse) on day 1 with 35 fish for 270 points, but on day 2 won zone D from peg 67 with 29 fish for 248 points.

Third-placed Dave won zone B from peg 32 on day 1, with 28 fish for 270 points. On day 2 he was second in zone C (Kelling) at peg 56 with 20 fish for 229 points.

The match attracted 63 anglers each day, who were split into four zones.

Day 1 winner was John Austin, who topped zone A at peg 1 with 34 fish for 414 points. Other zone winners on day 1 were Henry Randell (D65), Dave Shorthouse (B32, 270pts) and Scott McCartney (C49, 355pts).

Day 2 winner was Chris Spall (D67) and other zone winners were Nicky Robson (A5, 237pts); Steve Potts (C43, 232pts) and Dale McCallum (B36, 207pts).

■ **Result:** 1 Henry Randell, Bodham, 59 fish, 583 weight pts, 3 zone pts (12pts); 2 Chris Spall, Saxmundham, 64, 540, 3 (11); 3 Dave Shorthouse, Stafford, 58, 499, 3 (10); 4 Nicky Robson, Wallsend, 55, 523, 4 (9); 5 Steve Potts, Gosforth, 55, 484, 5 (8); 6 John Austin, Ipswich, 57, 604, 6 (7); 7 Gareth Gardiner, Sunderland, 52, 506, 7 (6); 8 Craig Ogilvie, North Berwick, 47, 499, 7 (5); 9 Scott McCartney, Prestwick, 50, 498, 7 (4); 10 Keith Ball, Sunderland, 43, 393, 9 (3). Zones (points based on daily entry) – Dale McCallum, Edinburgh (2).

THE 32ND IRISH WINTER SHORE ANGLING FESTIVAL

East Wexford beaches, 336 anglers

Dublin angler Paul Whelan made it consecutive victories and three wins in four years in this annual event, which attracted 112 anglers from all over the UK and Europe to fish the three-day competition.

Unusually calm weather with no wind, a flat sea and short tidal movement meant

the fishing was slow on all three days.

Day 1 was fished at Ballinoulart and started with heavy fog and, as predicted, the fishing was slow. The four zone winners were Gareth Griffiths (236 points), Seán Murray (210), Paul Whelan (350) and Matt White, who took the super pool with 14 fish for 388 points.

Longest round was a 49cm codling for Bill Lindfield. Best flatfish was a 32cm flounder for Arunas Cirkelis.

Day 2 was fished at Clones Strand, Kilgorman and Dodd's Rocks, Kiltennel, and again the fishing was scratchy. Zone winners were Paul Whelan, (493pts) Paul Heffernan (184), Ged Stevens who took the superpool with 23 fish for 699 points, and Jane Cantwell (260).

Longest round was a 41cm codling captured by Lesley Maby, and the best flatfish were 33cm flounders caught by Joe

Byrne and Mark Shortt.

Last year's winner Paul Whelan was now in pole position with two zone wins, Ged Stevens was a point behind and Gareth Griffiths a further point adrift.

The final session was fished on Ballinesker beach, normally a tough venue. There were a few better areas, but in general a lack of fish, although the best bags of the week were recorded.

Zone winners were Joe Wales (482), Barry Roche (395), Ben Arnold (614) and Chris Clark, who won the superpool with 31 fish for 782 points. Longest round was a 33cm coalfish for Peter Taite and the longest flatfish was a 37cm flounder for Dave Farrelly.

That meant Paul Whelan topped the event with 88 points (two zone wins and a third), two points ahead of Gareth Giffiths who had a zone win followed by

PENN SHORTS

■ Aberdeen Thistle SAC open, Stonehaven to Aberdeen, 21 anglers:

1 Mike Horn, Kirkcaldy, 8.02kg, including biggest fish, 1.78kg codling (2pts); 2 Tony Watters, Aberdeen, 3.70kg (1); 3 Chris Horn, Kirkcaldy, 2.46kg.

■ **Mike and Chris's Winter Heaviest Cod League round 5, Carnoustie to Ferryden lighthouse, Angus, 30 anglers:** 1 Alan Combe, Kirkcaldy, 8 fish, 15-8-0, including heaviest cod, 3-5-8 (3pts); 2 Kevin Lewis, Arbroath, 7, 10-10-0 (2); 3 Chris Horn, Kirkcaldy, 6, 7-0-8 (1). Final league – 1 David Cargill, 8-15-8 cod; 2 Chris Horn, 8-12-8 cod.

■ **Hastings & St Leonards AA Reg Willis memorial open, Hastings, East Sussex, 24 anglers:** 1 Ralph Crosby, Hastings, 13 fish, 7-6-0 (2pts); 2 Eddie Ryder, Lancing, 6, 5-7-0 (1); 3 Ben Arnold, Brighton, 5-3-0. Heaviest fish – Steve Swan, Deal, 0-15-0 whiting

■ **Hornsea SAC pairs open, East Yorkshire, 22 anglers:** 1 Chris Fisher, Aldbrough, 1.10kg cod at Aldbrough (2pts); 2 Simon Drayton, Gainsborough, 0.80kg cod at Out Newton (1); 3 Gareth Moore, Driffild, 0.70kg cod at Mappleton. Pairs – 1 Chris Fisher, Aldbrough & Mick Coates, Hull, 4.65kg; 2 Simon Drayton, Gainsborough & George Smith, Grimsby, 2.70kg; 3 Mark Colman, Hornsea & Matt Riggs, Hull, 2.65kg.

■ **Kent Flounder League round 1, Greenhithe, Kent, 41 anglers:** 1 Trevor

Cousens, Bearsted, 139cm, including heaviest fish (4pts); 2 Lee Collins, Gillingham, 119cm (3); 3 Russell Clark, Rochford, 110cm (2). Zone – Ray Jeffery, Sheerness, 94cm (1).

■ **John Lacey memorial open, Fenit Pier, Co. Kerry, 31 anglers:** 1 John Osborne, Waterville, 3 fish, 76pts (3pts); 2 Liz Conway McMahon, 2, 46 (2); 3 Connie O'Sullivan, 2, 42 (1).

■ **Leinster Shore Spring/Summer League open, Kilcoole, Newcastle, Co. Wicklow, 52 anglers:** 1 Mark Shortt, Bray SA, 9 fish, 221pts (5pts); 2 Alby Allan, South Shore, 11, 212 (4); 3 Joe Carley, Menapia, 9, 129 (3).

■ **North Kerry SAC open, Glin, Co. Limerick, 15 anglers:** 1 James Allman, Tralee, 31pts (2pts); 2 Janis Liseckis, 10 (1).

■ **Tralee Bay SAC open, Ventry, Co Kerry, 30 anglers:** 1 Ned Fitzpatrick, 24 fish, 770pts (3pts); 2 Chris O'Sullivan, Tralee, 16, 679 (2); 3 Janis Liseckis, 23, 626 (1).

■ **Yorkshire FSA open, Ulrome, East Yorkshire, 20 anglers:** 1 James Barret, Hull, 24 fish, 11-10-8 (2pts); 2 Michael Suddaby, Hull, 23, 10-11-4 (1); 3 Ian Beach, 14, 7-6-8.

■ **Yorkshire FSA open, Withernsea, East Yorks, 12 anglers:** 1 Keith Mumby, Grimsby, 12 fish, 10-2-8, including 45cm cod (1pt); 2 Michael Suddaby, Hull, 14, 8-9-12; 3 Paul Scott, Beverley, 12, 457.

NEWS IN BRIEF

END PEG WIN

■ **Ralph Crosby won the Reg Willis Memorial open, organised by Hastings & St Leonards AA, with 13 fish, including four dogfish, for 7-6-0 from end peg 1. Runner-up in the match at Hastings was Eddie Ryder with 5-7-0 from peg 2.**

two third places. Ged Stevens was third with 84 points, consisting of a zone win, second and sixth.

Pairs winners were Matt White and Ged Stevens, while the team of four prize went to Chris Clark, John Wells, Richard Yates and Saul Page.

■ **Result:** 1 Paul Whelan, Dublin, 88 zone pts, 1195 fish points (20pts); 2 Gareth Griffiths, Barrow, 86, 817 (19); 3 Ged Stevens, Barrow, 84, 1196 (18); 4 Ben Arnold, Brighton, 81, 1215 (17); 5 Joe Arch, 81, 962 (16). Longest fish – Bill Lindfield, Greasby, 49cm cod (10).

Zones (based on daily entry) – Day 1, Sean Murray, Dublin 210 & Matt White, Barrow, 388. Day 2, Paul Heffernan, Ballybrack, 184 & Jane Cantwell 260; Day 3, Joe Wales, Shoreham, 482 & Barry Roche, Wexford, 395 (all 3).

FORDS SAC 45TH FESTIVAL

Rolling Mill to Beach Lane, Netley, Southampton, 80 anglers

Only eight fish were caught in this zoned event, with winner Phil Steer, of Portsmouth, catching a 1lb 3oz flounder from the white zone at Netley.

In second was Dave Stewart, of Gosport, with a 15oz flounder from the same zone. Kevin Warner, of Horncastle, was third thanks to a 14oz flounder from the red zone at Weston.

■ **Result:** 1 Phil Steer, Portsmouth, 1-3-0 (8pts); 2 Dave Stewart, Gosport, 0-15-0 (7); 3 Kevin Warner, Horncastle, 0-14-0 (6).

FRANKIE OLDHAM OPEN

Amble to Tynemouth, Northumberland, 81 anglers

Two fish for 10-2-0 secured top spot in this North East rover for Gavin Lockey, of Amble. His catch included the heaviest fish, an 8lb 10oz cod, caught at Amble.

Second-placed John Bell, of Newbiggin, caught four codling for 9-13-0, with Chris Robson, of Cramlington, finishing third with five fish for 8-9-0.

■ **Result:** 1 Gavin Lockey, Amble, 2 fish, 10-2-0, also heaviest fish, 8-10-0 (8pts); 2 John T Bell, Newbiggin, 4, 9-13-0 (7); 3 Chris Robson, Cramlington, 5, 8-9-0 (6).

SOUTHERN LEAGUE RND 1

Eastney, Hants, 87 anglers

Match winner, with a bag of 15-8-0, which included the heaviest fish, a 12lb 6oz undulate, was Malcolm Penny, on peg 18.

Ben Arnold, on peg 20, was runner-up with 6-6-0, followed by Paul Simmonds, on peg 1, with 6-2-0.

■ **Result:** 1 Malcolm Penny, Waterlooville, 15-8-0 (8pts); 2 Ben Arnold, Brighton, 6-6-0 (7); 3 Paul Simmonds, Faversham, 6-2-0

TOUGH OPENER

■ **Tralee Bay SAC's first competition of 2020 on Fenit Pier was fished in a howling easterly wind and dropping tide that combined to play havoc with the fishing. Winner John Osborne caught three fish for 76 points.**

(6). Zones – Colin Carey, Hastings, 4-13-0; Malcolm Stote, Lymington, 5-2-0 & Darren Dixon, Portsmouth, 4-4-0 (all 3).

TONY'S TACKLE EXCALIBUR OPEN

Eastbourne, East Sussex, 101 anglers

Winner of the £1,000 first prize was Rob Tuck, who was fishing at peg D7 in front of the clubhouse, where he caught 12 whiting, two dabs, three plaice and the two bass on his last cast – the best 2lb 3oz.

■ **Result:** 1 Rob Tuck, Holland on Sea, 19 fish, 8-4-0, including heaviest fish, 2-3-0 bass (10pts); 2 Nigel Scott, Canterbury, 22, 8-3-0 (9); 3 Luke Mooring, Dover, 20, 7-10-0 (8). Zones – Dave Rose, Bristol, 3-7-0; Jamie Morgan, Eastbourne, 5-12-0 & Ian Hopper, Eastbourne, 6-4-0 (all 3).

WELSH FSA EAST REGION SHORE LEAGUE

Aberthaw & Boverton, Vale of Glamorgan, 73 anglers

Two blonde rays, a poor cod and a conger for 12.22kg, caught at Stout Point, earned first place for Ben Davies (pictured), of Llantwit Major, in this first match match.

■ **Result:** 1 Ben Davies, Llantwit Major, 4 fish, 12.22kg (7pts); 2 Jamie Sergeant, Swansea, 6, 9.50kg (6); 3 Nigel Putbrace, Cardiff, 9, 8.42kg (5).

THE BIG FINAL

■ **The Penn Sea League Final will be held at Chesil Beach, Dorset, on August 1. Planning is continuing for our prestigious annual match and information will be sent out to the 40 qualifiers from the 2019 Penn Sea League.**

HOW IT WORKS

■ **With £10,000 in tackle prizes spread over the two divisions, points, based on entries, are awarded to the top three, section winners and captors of the largest fish caught in each designated Penn match.**



Penn also awards a prize of a Spinfisher fixed-spool reel to the angler scoring the most points in matches shown in each issue.

If there is a tie, the winner will be the angler whose total is from the greatest number of results and is then chosen on merit by the editor. An angler can win only one reel during the year.

To win a prize you must be registered with the Penn Sea League – supply your name, address, phone and email.

Send fixtures, results and league registration by email to: SeaAngler@bauermedia.co.uk

MONTHLY WINNER

■ **581: Ben Arnold, Worthing, 24pts.**

LEADERBOARDS

PREMIER DIVISION

Neil Cutler	Gateshead	30
Julian Shambrook	Torquay	26
Keith Smith	Blyth	26
Paul Whelan	Dublin	25
Ben Arnold	Brighton	24
Saul Page	Deal	20
Gareth Griffiths	Barrow	19
George Smith	Grimsby	19
Ben Richards	Ramsey	18
Ged Stevens	Barrow	18
Darren Bond	Lancing	17
Joe Arch	Llanishen	16
Dean Ambler	-	15
Luke Ingle	Scarborough	15
Russell Preston	Bristol	14
George Horner	Scarborough	13
Henry Randell	Bodham	13
Dave Chidzoy	Bridport	12
Tony Havill	Torbay	11
Chris Spall	Saxmundham	11
Bill Lindfield	Greasby	10
Dave Shorthouse	Stafford	10
Rob Tuck	Holland on Sea	10


* Only those with 10 or more points are listed

DIVISION ONE

D Bell	Newbiggin	29
Phil Grey	Alnwick	28
Simon Hill	Seaham	27
Billy Foster	Newbiggin	25
Adam Johnson	South Shields	24
Chris Guthrie	Cramlington	23
David Harvey	Newbiggin	22
Steve Hewitson	St Bees	21
Gavin Lockey	Amble	18
Gary Golightly	Peterlee	17
Daniel Swan	Sunderland	16
Andy Tymon	Scarborough	16
Dave Cross	Scarborough	14
Andrew Foster	Easington	14
Mike Hingston	DOE SAC	13
Nathan Brennan	-	13
Phil Arliss	Filey	12
Tony O'Neill	Saundersfoot	11
James Barratt	Hull	10
Mark Griffiths	Gorseinon	10
Stuart Allen	Tenby	9
Malcolm Penny	Waterlooville	8
Phil Steer	Portsmouth	8

* Only those with eight or more points are listed

* Leaderboards include all matches to February 21st



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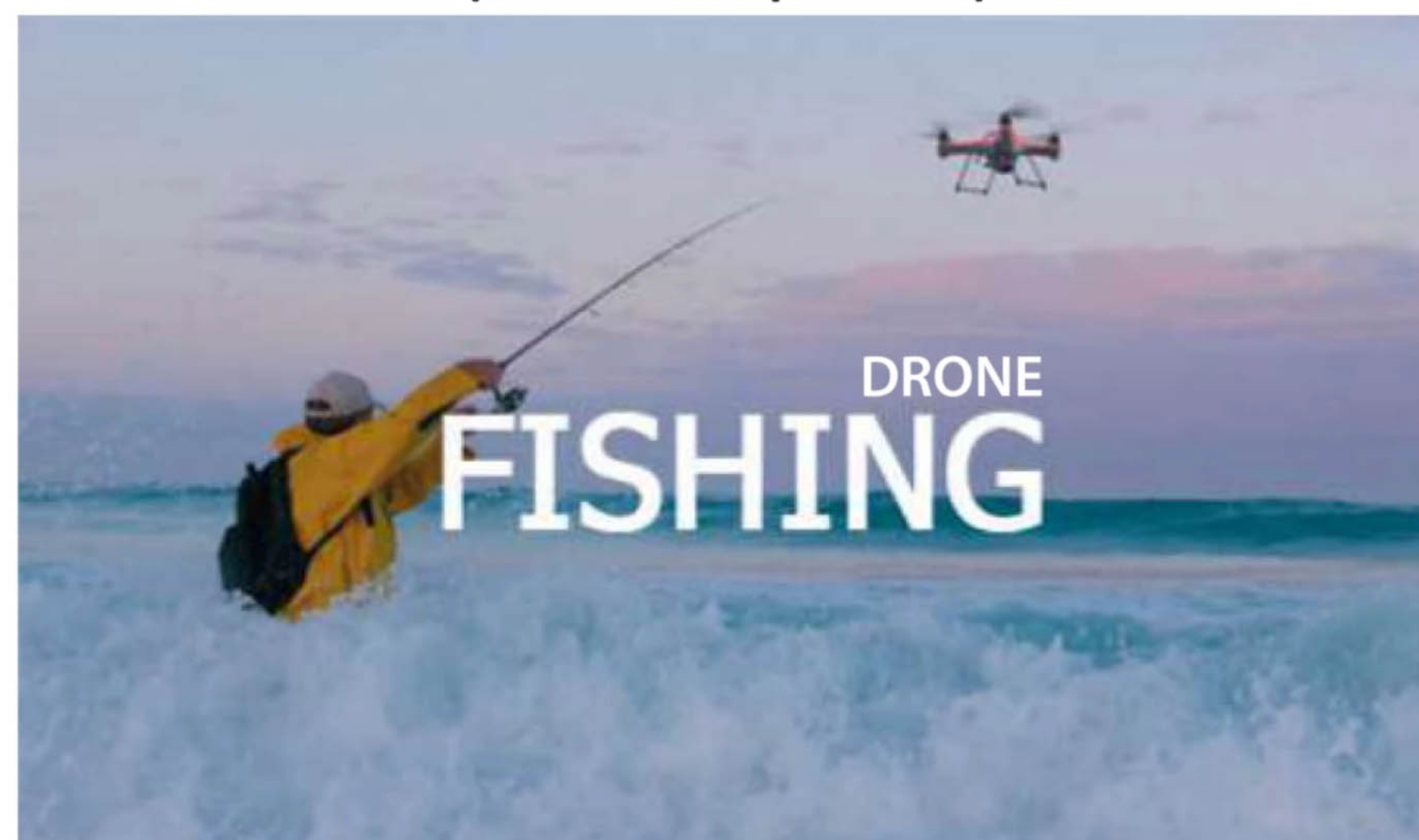
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WHAT'S ON

MARCH

6: EOBC Flattie Bash, Hornsea and Mappleton, 10.30am-2pm, catch & release, register 8am-10.30am at Hornsea Floral Hall, £10 entry, George 07857 550125.

● 7: New Milton SFC open, Avon beach, 7pm-midnight, £1,000 prize fund (subject to attendance), pegged, C&R, £20 all-in, sign in from 5.30pm at sunken car park, Avon beach, BH23 4DU, £1,000 prize fund (subject to attendance), Lawrence Darke 07759 829226.

● 7-8 The 27th Paul Roggeman European Open Beach Championship, North Marine Parade, Bridlington to Spurn Pilot Jetty, 9am-3pm both days, weigh in ends 4pm, HQ Sand le Mere, £25 per day or £35 for both days, £15/£25 juniors, pairs £20 extra, fours £20 extra (all prices are for purchases before event), www.eobc.co.uk

● 8: East Anglian Teams of Five open, Dunwich, 10am-3pm, Rob Tuck 07855 848967.

● 8: Kent Flounder League rnd 3, Allhallows, 9.15am-1.45pm, register from 7.45am at car park (ME3 9QD), measure & return, book only, Ian 07791 234318.

● 8: North Norfolk National Sea League rnd 6 & open, Bacton, Tony 07780 793141 or thomasamt@btinternet.com

● 8: Blackdown SAC open, Minehead to Blue Anchor, 4pm-8pm, sign in 2pm at Hobby Horse pub, Minehead, Joe 07547

227379 or joehussell@outlook.com

● 8: Bispham Angling Sea League rnd 3 of 11 & open, Gynn Wall, 8am-noon, book on 7am at wall, £20 entry, 15cm minimum size, no crabs, book only, Dave 07472 249294 or Tony 07702 229015.

● 8: Leinster Shore Spring/Summer League open, Wexford SAC, Kilmuckridge area, Leinster League rules, Paul 00353 (0)851425728.

● 14: Chesil League rnd 1 & open, Masonic, 6pm-11pm, £25 league entry, best eight matches from 10, booking essential, Dave Lane 07977 132951.

● 14: North Kerry SAC open, Ballybunion, 1pm-5pm, James Allman 00353 (0)87 776 9456.

● 15: Scottish FSA open cod rover, Arbroath, 10am-3pm, register 8am-9am at Victoria Park, Chris 07872 944807, Mike 07933 003985 & Davy 07831 192717.

● 15 Asso Five Man League rnd 2 of 4 & open, Hastings & St Leonards beaches, 11am-4pm, lug, fish and squid baits only, £50 team of five, £10 individual league (best three from four), £20 entry, NSL team qualifier, Colin 07971 252652.

● 21-22: SAMF Masters Final, Princes Parade, Hythe, book in from 7pm Friday at Burstin Hotel, Folkestone, Ian 07789 651191 or Tony Thomas 07780 793141.

● 21: Southern League rnd 3 of 12 & open, Chesil, 3pm-8pm, pegged, measure & return, undersize fish count as 1oz, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2020 League

entry £20, booking ends one hour before start, Darren 07919 073 232, Nick 07870 922 216, Mike 07983 579 596, Ian 07736 004 714 or Ant 07775 691 916.

● 21: Yorkshire FSA open, Kilnsea, 10am-3pm, meet 9am, c&r, weight conversion, heaviest bag, £12 all-in, £2 juniors (must be accompanied by adult), Keith Mumby 07340 758013.

● 21: Tralee Bay SAC open, Inch, 5pm-9pm, Chris 00353 (0)85 1532770.

● 21: West Coast Shore League rnd 2 & open, Enniscrone, Co Sligo, €25 entry, juniors free, IFSA members only, best five out of six legs, Sean Murray 00353 (0)86 3129787.

● 22: Welsh FSA East Region Shore League open, Marcross & Monknash, 9.15am-2.15pm, book in by 7.45am at Marcross car park, Steve Chadwick 07777 689289.

● 22: Bognor Regis AAS open, West End Beach, Bognor Regis, 8.30am-1.30pm, catch & release, draw from 7.30am opposite Waverly pub, Marine Drive West, PO21 2QA, John Small 07799 762377 (after 5pm).

● 23: Hornsea SAC Mark Loudon memorial open, 10am-4pm, John 07968 215565.

● 28: Flatfish open, Whitehaven North Pier & North Beach, 10am-2pm, flatfish only, 20cm minimum, longest flatfish, longest length, 50 pegs, book only, Andrew 07494 922986.

● 28: Scottish FSA open, Riverside Drive, Dundee, 1pm-6pm, pegged & zoned, lug

TIDES FOR MARCH & APRIL

LONDON BRIDGE *

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MARCH

4	WED	07.42	5.88	20.25	5.57
5	THU	09.08	5.79	22.03	5.67
6	FRI	10.39	6.07	23.24	6.07
7	SAT	11.51	6.53	***	***
8	SUN	00.29	6.51	12.51	6.94
9	MON	01.21	6.85	13.42	7.23
10	TUE	02.08	7.11	14.30	7.42
11	WED	02.51	7.30	15.15	7.50
12	THU	03.33	7.44	15.57	7.46
13	FRI	04.12	7.46	16.39	7.26
14	SAT	04.53	7.33	17.20	6.95
15	SUN	05.35	7.08	18.03	6.57
16	MON	06.21	6.74	18.50	6.20
17	TUE	07.15	6.36	19.47	5.86
18	WED	08.24	6.01	21.01	5.62
19	THU	09.45	5.86	22.36	5.67
20	FRI	11.12	6.05	23.50	6.04
21	SAT	** **	** **	12.19	6.42
22	SUN	00.42	6.39	13.06	6.67
23	MON	01.24	6.61	13.45	6.77
24	TUE	02.00	6.74	14.20	6.80
25	WED	02.32	6.86	14.50	6.83
26	THU	03.02	6.95	15.18	6.85
27	FRI	03.30	6.98	15.45	6.82
28	SAT	03.59	6.92	16.12	6.70
29	SUN	05.28	6.79	17.42	6.52

30	MON	06.00	6.62	18.15	6.30
31	TUE	06.36	6.44	18.54	6.07

APRIL

1	WED	07.20	6.24	19.42	5.82
2	THU	08.18	6.02	20.49	5.60
3	FRI	09.39	5.90	22.27	5.62
4	SAT	11.12	6.15	23.56	6.03
5	SUN	** **	** **	12.26	6.61
6	MON	01.03	6.53	13.28	7.01
7	TUE	01.57	6.93	14.20	7.27
8	WED	02.43	7.21	15.07	7.40
9	THU	03.27	7.41	15.51	7.44
10	FRI	04.08	7.55	16.33	7.38
11	SAT	04.48	7.57	17.13	7.19
12	SUN	05.30	7.41	17.54	6.87
13	MON	06.12	7.10	18.34	6.48
14	TUE	06.58	6.69	19.18	6.10
15	WED	07.51	6.27	20.12	5.76
16	THU	08.57	5.93	21.24	5.52
17	FRI	10.16	5.80	22.56	5.56
18	SAT	11.38	5.97	** **	** **
19	SUN	00.13	5.90	12.46	6.31
20	MON	01.09	6.28	13.36	6.57
21	TUE	01.52	6.55	14.15	6.68
22	WED	02.29	6.72	14.48	6.73
23	THU	03.02	6.86	15.18	6.78
24	FRI	03.33	6.96	15.47	6.82
25	SAT	04.03	7.00	16.16	6.81
26	SUN	04.33	6.96	16.48	6.71
27	MON	05.06	6.85	17.21	6.52

* TIDAL VARIATIONS FROM LONDON

Wick	-2.29	Barry	+5.08
Lossiemouth	-2.00	Swansea	+4.42
Aberdeen	-0.18	Milford Haven	+4.37
Stonehaven	-0.08	Fishguard	+5.44
Cockenzie	+0.47	Aberystwyth	-6.11
Berwick	+0.54	Barmouth	-5.45
Blyth	+1.46	Holyhead	-3.28
North Shields	+1.47	Menai Bridge	-3.08
Hartlepool	+1.59	Colwyn Bay	-2.47
Whitby	+2.20	Southport	-2.55
Scarborough	+2.30	Blackpool	-2.50
Filey Bay	+2.45	Morecambe	-2.33
Bridlington	+2.58	Barrow (Ramsden)	-2.28
Skegness	+4.29	Whitehaven	-2.30
Hunstanton	+4.44	Kirkcudbright Bay	-2.25
Cromer	+4.56	Girvan	-1.51
Lowestoft	-4.23	Ayr	-1.44
Aldeburgh	-2.53	Lamlash	-1.45
Felixstowe pier	-2.23	Greenock	-1.19
Clacton	-2.00	Oban	+4.12
Southend-on-Sea	-1.22	Gairloch	+5.16
Herne Bay	-1.24	Ullapool	+5.36
Margate	-1.52	Belfast	-2.47
Deal	-2.38	Douglas	-2.44
Dover	-2.53		
Dungeness	-3.05	IRELAND	
Eastbourne	-2.48	Dun Laoghaire	-2.09
Newhaven	-2.47	Arklow	-4.41
Brighton	-2.51	Rosslare harbour	+4.39
Worthing	-2.36	Baginbun Head	+3.53
Portsmouth	-2.29	Ballycotton	+3.45
Ryde	-2.29	Courtmacherry	+3.32
Southampton *	-2.53	Baltimore	+3.35
Poole (Entrance) *	-5.09	Bantry	+3.15
Bournemouth *	-5.09	Fenit pier	+3.13
Swanage *	-5.19	Kilrush	+4.02
Portland	+4.57	Galway	+3.36
Torquay	+4.40	Clifden Bay	+3.41
Dartmouth	+4.25	Westport Bay	+3.57
Plymouth	+4.05	Sligo harbour	+4.25
Fowey	+3.53	Killybegs	+4.21
Falmouth	+3.30	Rathmullan	+4.43
Newquay	+3.32		
Padstow	+3.45	NORTHERN IRELAND	
Barnstaple	+4.30	Belfast	-2.47
Weston-super-Mare	+5.05	Portrush	+5.48
Cardiff (Penarth)	+5.15	Red Bay	-2.41
		Carrickfergus	-2.42

Your at-a-glance match events planner

● = Penn Sea League

and mackerel only, two hooks, draw 11.30am at burger van, book only, Chris 07872 944807, Mike 07933 003985 & Davy 07831 192717.

● 28: Shingle Street spring open, Shingle Street, 2pm-7pm, weight to measure, whiting 27cm, other fish 18cm, £20 all-in, book with Rob Tuck, 07855 848967.

● 28 Asso Five Man League rnd 3 of 4 & open, Hastings & St Leonards beaches, 9.30am-2.30pm, lug, fish and squid baits only, £20 entry, NSL team qualifier, Colin Crosby 07971 252652.

28: Fishing for Benny fundraiser, Weybourne, 8am-1pm, £10 entry, biggest round & flat, best junior, raffle and refreshments afterwards at Lighthouse Church, 62 Cromer Rd, Sheringham, NR26 8RT, Mike 07387 716784.

APRIL

● 4: North Kerry SAC open, Knightstown pontoons, 2pm-6pm, James Allman 00353 (0)87 776 9456.

4: Poole Bay Plaice Chase, kayak meet and competition in aid of Heroes on the Water, Sandbanks, longest plaice, suitable for all, PBSBAC support boat in attendance, £10 entry, visit Poole Kayak Fishing on Facebook.

● 4-5: Skua AC two-day open, Talacre, 1.15pm-5.15pm, Sat, 2pm-6pm Sun, meet at beach car park, book through Skua's Facebook page or Ben Price 07393 201284.

● 4-5: Norfolk Sea Angling Festival, Cley to Walcott (excluding Cromer pier), 10am-3pm both days, biggest fish rover, £500 1st, Dene 01263 838248.

5: Hastings & St Leonards AA thornback boat comp, 8am-4pm, 01424 430120.

● 5: Chesil Beach flatfish open, 11am-5pm, Abbotsbury, £15 entry, £5 juniors and OAPs, £500 1st, £250 longest fish, sign on from 9am at Abbotsbury car park, Weymouth Angling Centre, 01305 777771.

● 5: SA1 Fishing Club open, Swansea Breakwater, 1.30pm-5.30pm, 10 cash prizes, longest single fish, all cards to be presented by 6.30pm at Ship Inn, St Thomas, backup venue is Swansea beach (369 café to town hall), book at Mainwarings or H R Jones, Clydach, all week, or from 11.30am on day at McDonald's, Clive 07929 389088.

● 5: Bristol Channel FSA spring open, Blue Anchor to Minehead, 3.30pm-7.30pm, sign in from 1.30pm at Hobby Horse, www.bcfsa.org.uk for information.

● 11: Senhouse Street SAC Easter open, Perch Light to Grasslot pier (pier excluded), 9am-1pm, £1,000 for heaviest flatfish, £500 heaviest bag, register from 7am-8.45am at Senhouse Street WMC, CA14 2SJ, £20 entry, Mark 07775 637801 or Mike 07548 949140.

● 11 Asso Five Man League rnd 4 of 4 & open, Hastings & St Leonards beaches, 11am-4pm, lug, fish and squid baits only, £50 team of five, £10 individual league (best three from four), £20 entry, NSL team qualifier, Colin Crosby 07971 252652.

● 12: Bass Rock SAC open, Belhaven, 10am-2pm, register 8am-9am at West Barns Bowling Club, EH42 1UH, 80 pegs, catch & release, £10 entry, £5 optional longest fish pool, children free with paying adult, prize for all children, 18cm minimum flatfish, 20cm roundfish, book only, Craig 07840 770643 or Barry 07813 924555.

PENN PLUS

April 10: Seaham SAC Good Friday open, Hendon groyne to South Stack, Blast Beach, 1pm-6pm, heaviest single fish, £10 entry, £3 optional prizes, Ian Ainsley 0191 581 0321.



Northumberland, North Eastern, Eastern and Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs)

Section 155 & 156 Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

Pursuant to the above Act, the above IFCAs intend to apply to the Minister for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the confirmation of the following byelaw within each district:

Byelaws

Each of the IFCAs intends to introduce a byelaw as follows:

Northumberland IFCA: Minimum Sizes Byelaw 2020

North Eastern IFCA: Byelaw XXXII Fish, Mollusc and Crustacea Minimum Size Byelaw 2019

Eastern IFCA: Minimum Sizes Byelaw 2019

Kent and Essex IFCA: Minimum Sizes Byelaw

These byelaws are intended to replace the Fish, Mollusc and Crustacea Minimum Size Emergency Byelaws 2019, implemented under s.157 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act. The intended effect of the byelaws is to ensure the continued protective effect of minimum size rules on fish stocks in the context of changes to European legislation, and to effectively maintain the conditions which existed immediately prior to the changes. This will be achieved through the prevention of the removal of pre-spawning fish and shellfish from fisheries which are below the minimum size, established within European legislation, in relation to commercial and non-commercial fisheries and to enable the effective enforcement of such.

Each IFCA will introduce a separate version of the byelaw within the corresponding district. There are variations between the wording of the byelaws to reflect local circumstances.

As the byelaws will maintain the protective effect of measures which were already in place prior to their amendment by the European Commission, no additional impact to commercial and non-commercial fisheries stakeholders are anticipated.

The full text of the above byelaws, associated Impact Assessments and further information can be inspected at, or obtained from the following

Northumberland IFCA: 8 Ennerdale Rd, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 4RT. Tel: 01670 797676; email: nifca@nifca.gov.uk; website: www.nifca.gov.uk.

North Eastern IFCA: Town Hall, Quay Rd, Bridlington, East Riding of Yorkshire, YO16 4LP. Tel: 01482 393515; email: ne-ifca@eastriding.gov.uk; website: www.ne-ifca.gov.uk.

Eastern IFCA: 6 North Lynn Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn, PE30 2JG. Tel: 01553 775321; email: mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk; website: www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk.

Kent and Essex IFCA: Paragon House, Albert Street, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 9HD. Tel: 01843 585310; email: info@kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk; website: www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk.

Any person wishing to comment, support or object to the byelaws must do so in writing before **12pm on 6th April 2020**, to the CEO of the relevant IFCA at the above addresses **and** send a copy to: Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team, Marine Management Organisation, Lancaster House, Hampshire Court, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE4 7HY, Email: IFCABylaws@marinemangement.org.uk

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TIME MACHINE

Looking back through 40 years of Britain's biggest and best sea angling magazine...

MARCH

2010

■ A superb 23lb cod was caught two miles off Poole, Dorset, during what had been planned as a bass trip. Nick Colbert, who was fishing aboard Silver Spray, skippered by Andy Cummings, out of Poole, had caught two bass to 7lb further offshore before catching the cod nearer to the port.

■ Fishing from a private boat off The Needles, Isle of Wight, Pete Hodson bagged a chunky 5lb 14oz whiting. The Bournemouth angler caught it on black lug and mackerel strip.

■ Lugworms on a Pennell rig with size 2/0 hooks produced an 11lb 9oz cod for Mark Owen, of Lowestoft, Suffolk. He caught it an hour before high water at Aldeburgh's town beach.

■ An angler accused of fly-tipping was cleared by a court when he proved he was using old tyres to catch peeler crabs. Gavin Hill, of South Shields, was spotted placing tyres in the River Don at Jarrow.

■ England's shore angling teams secured a new sponsorship package with Tronix, the West Sussex tackle company.

■ The Sea Anglers Match Federation launched a website to allow present and new members to join online as well as view match dates and newsletters.

2000

■ Grimsby charter skipper Ray White, of the MV Impulsive, was about to launch a new boat, the 85ft Invincible in time for the North Sea wrecking season.

■ Three cod weighing more than 30lb were reported from the Bristol Channel. Biggest was a 35-pounder for Jason Irish, of Bridgwater, who fished from



his own boat. There was a 33lb 8oz fish for Roger Balnard, of Hereford, who fished in a private boat in Sully Bay. Completing the trio was a 31lb cod for Carl Norris, of Mountain Ash, who fished on Enterprise, skippered by Paul Davies, out of Swansea.

■ Big cod were showing off the Isle of Wight too. A 33lb fish fell to Nick Walton, of Christchurch,

who fished the Nab Tower, while aboard Bessie Vee, skippered by Spike Spears. Roger Lamb, of Camberley, caught a 30-pounder east of the Nab, while on Dawn Venture, skippered by Ross Burnett, out of Langstone, while Poole skipper Steve Hughes, on his boat Lady Jayne, reported a 39lb 4oz fish.

■ Shore angler Jade Nicholson landed a 20lb cod from the Coffin Rocks, at his home town of Newbiggin, Northumberland, while Balcary Point, in Dumfries and Galloway, produced a 21lb 3oz cod for John Blackwood, of Dalbeattie.

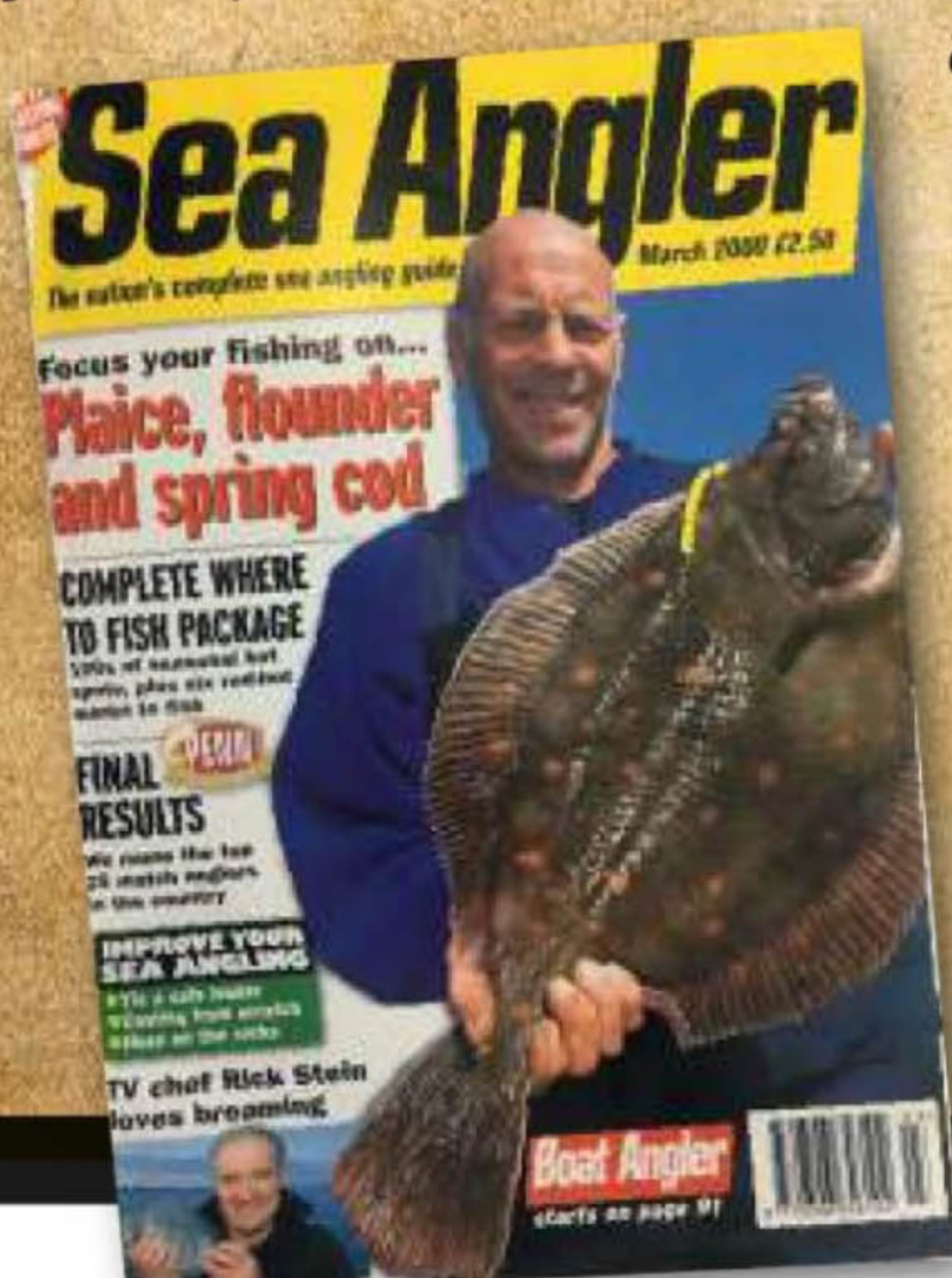
■ Wales secured a one-point victory in a tough Home International shore event held in County Wexford, Ireland. England won Day 1, but blanked on the second, while Ireland topped Day 2. Wales were second on both days and took the overall victory.

1990

■ Douglas AC, on the Isle of Man, was celebrating its centenary with a big-money three-day beach festival. The event would have £5,000 in cash prizes.

■ The biggest cod ever landed from the Devon shoreline fell to Plymouth angler Peter Fulton. While fishing at Crow Point, he caught a stunning 35lb 8oz fish in a 15ft swell.

■ Fishing at Cold Knap beach at Barry, South Wales, Steven Hughes caught a 28lb cod. The angler, from Porth, had planned to fish Penarth pier, but changed his mind when he arrived too late to get the best from the tide.



■ Weymouth AS member Mick Gibbs caught a 6lb 15oz 8dr ballan wrasse and then hooked something heavier, a 19lb 5oz pollack. He was fishing on the west side of Portland.

■ Peter Savage, of Ufford, Suffolk, boated a 24lb cod on lugworms while fishing the flood tide half-a-mile off Orford Island.

■ The Sea Anglers Match Federation had a new sponsor for its national championships. Taking over from Richot Napoleon Brandy was Herald Marine. The event format had also been changed to include regional semi-finals.

1980

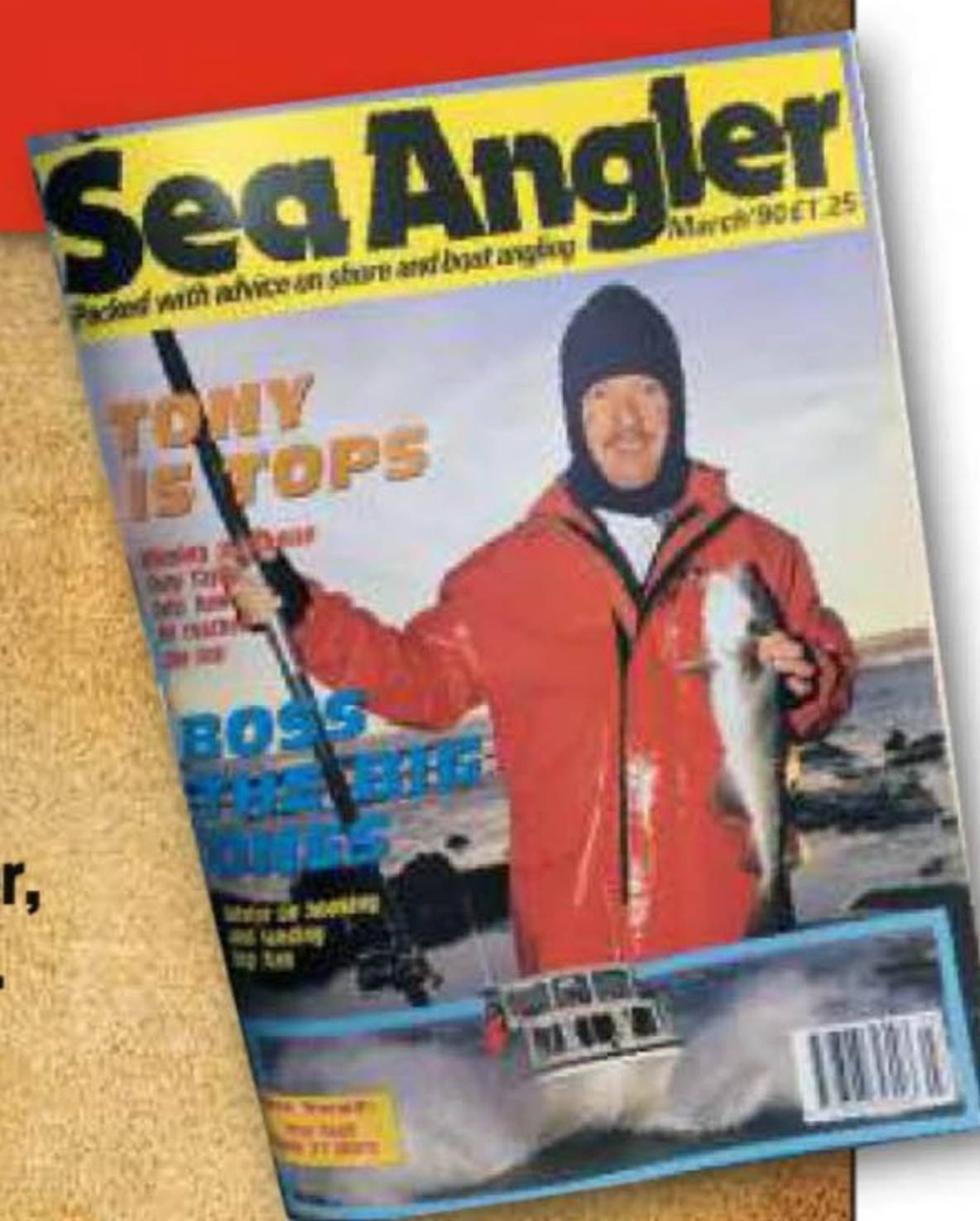
■ Skipper Trevor Hayward was making a name for himself, on his boat Telstar, out of Yarmouth, Isle of Wight. His cod season had produced nearly 200 fish, with all but a few weighing in double figures. The best being a 41lb 6oz fish for Charlie Scutt, of Newport.

■ Geoff Birch, formerly skipper of Woolin, out of Bradwell, had a new 37ft boat operating out of the Essex port.

■ Chesil Beach in Dorset produced a 38lb 11oz cod for young shore angler Nigel Lynn, of Dorchester. A few days later Gary Frampton, also from Dorchester, caught one of 27lb 9oz.

■ But it was not all great fishing at Chesil. When 43 members of the Brixham club travelled to the big beach to fish for large cod, they only caught three fish – two pout and a dab.

■ Torbay ASA gave up its clubroom on Beacon Quay when faced with a 150 per cent rent increase and a 40 per cent rise in rates.



IRONIXPRO BLAZE MXIV 13ft 6 4-7oz

A heavier, match style rod that is capable of casting leads to 7oz plus bait. This is the rod of choice for the angler who is likely to be fishing in mixed to rough ground but requires a sensitive tip and good bite detection at range.

- FEATURES**
- Designed for multiplier use
 - 2 piece Rod
 - Shrink wrapped butt with sliding Fuji DPS reel seat
 - Constructed of xT carbon
 - Fuji K Guides
 - Comes with rod bag



RRP £342.21 **GP £309.99**

IRONIXPRO BLAZE MXV 14ft 2 4-8.8oz

The heavyweight of the MX range, the MXV has been designed as the rod for the angler who fishes in deep water, heavy rough ground and in fast running tides such as in the Bristol Channel. The rod of choice for the angler who is fishing for big conger and tope off the shore and big rays and cod in rough ground and deep water.

- FEATURES**
- Designed for multiplier use
 - 2 piece Rod
 - Shrink wrapped butt with sliding Fuji DPS reel seat
 - Constructed of xT carbon
 - Fuji K Guides
 - Comes with rod bag



RRP £411.10 **GP £379.99**



AKIOS SHUTTLE 656 AURUM REEL

10TH ANNIVERSARY LIMITED EDITION

The reels have come a long way from the original reels. This limited edition version boasts a huge max drag of 17.5lb which allows it to comfortably be used for larger species such as Hounds, Rays and Huss but still being silky smooth and much more enjoyable to use than just about any other reel on the market.
Holds 330yds of 15lb, 5.3:1 ratio.

GP £249.99



AKIOS 656 RBX CTM OBX REEL

This is an upgraded Akios focusing on power and durability to target bigger species such as Huss, Hounds and Rays and also to deal with rougher fishing marks. The reel still sticks to the 656 (6500) size which balances brilliantly on most shore rods but internally it boasts a stronger carbon drag system and stainless and stronger gearing to ensure it doesn't let you down.
Ratio 5.3:1. Holds 330 yards of 15lb mono.

GP £139.99

PENN FATHOM II SD CASTING MAGS

The Penn Fathom II star drag reel is built with a rigid metal frame and sideplates, now with added features to make it more angler friendly than ever. Featuring the fast gear access sideplate, allowing any angler to service the gears and the HT-100 drag system quickly and efficiently. The Penn live spindle design offers long, effortless casts, while the power gear ratios give ultimate torque for winching big fish. Magnetic casting braking system. Ratio 6.1:1.

12 CAP 270M X 0.35MM **GP £159.99**
15 CAP 325M X 0.35MM **GP £169.99**

SEALINE SL20SH / SL30SH

- Capacity - 300m x 20lb mono
- Centrifugal Braking system for easy casting
- Four ball bearings for totally smooth operation & superior winding power
- Five-point support frame lightweight but extra strong anodised aluminium spool
- Multi-washer super-smooth drag system
- Counter balanced handle adjustable for increased leverage
- Rod clamp supplied perfect for rocky marks with it's fast retrieve 6.1-1

RRP: £160.00 **GP £74.99**

TOP SURF SMOCK

GP £234.99
XXL EXTRA £20.00

This is without doubt the best designed fishing smock on the market. This hard wearing smock has an incredible waterproof rating of 25000mm which will keep you dry in any conditions for any length of time. Breathable rating of 5000g/m2/24h allowing you to reach further away marks without melting and becoming wet.

AQUASTAR BIB AND BRACE

- GP £109.98**
- Self grip ankle straps
 - Large thigh pockets
 - Front zip gusset keeping you fully waterproof
 - Taped seams

All Guy Cotten clothing it is made to a specification rather than a price point to ensure no corners are cut.



UMAX ARX CLOTHING

(BUY AND SMOCK OR JACKET WITH B&B FOR 5%)

Stylish new look made from a new rib-stop fabric, retains it great warmth quilt with the 160gsm thermo insulation. It is 100% waterproof with a TPU Membrane of 8000mm plus all fully tapered seams.

JACKET

Norm £89.99
GP £69.99

- Water-repellent 1/2 front zipper protected by wind fillet
- Large Front Pocket
- Water-repellent zipper at the left side
- Reflective Piping
- Adjustable hood
- Adjustable Cuffs



FREE POST

SMOCK

Norm £79.99
GP £64.99

- Water-repellent 1/2 front zipper protected by wind fillet
- Large Front Pocket
- Water-repellent zipper at the left side, for easy pull on and off!
- Reflective Piping
- Adjustable hood
- Adjustable Cuffs



FREE POST

BIB & BRACE

Norm £79.99
GP £64.99

- Strong 2 way front zippers
- 2 fleece lined hand warmer pockets
- 2 fleece lined wp zipper side pockets
- Long zipped gusset at bottom with velcro adjustable strap

FREE POST



PENN BATTLE II 8000 LONG CAST

- Capacity mono spool 370yds 15lb
- Capacity braid spool 220yds 0.22mm

+ FREE SPIDERWIRE STEALTH 8 STRAND BRAID



RRP: £139.99 **GP £119.99**

PENN SPINFISHER SSVI LONGCAST REELS

- Great line lay? Check ✓
- Fully waterproof? Check ✓
- Huge 20lb plus drag? Check ✓
- Quality CNC gearing? Check ✓

These, in our eyes are the best fixed spool shore reels available.

- 5500LC 4.3:1, Cap 250yds x 12lb mono
- 6500LC 4.8:1, Cap 350yds x 15lb mono
- 7500LC 4.3:1, Cap 440yds x 15lb mono

5500LC RRP £189.99 **GP £149.99**
6500LC RRP £199.99 **GP £159.99**
7500LC RRP £209.99 **GP £164.99**



Shakespeare AGILITY 8000 LONG CAST

- 410yds x 15lb mono
- 4.3.1. Ratio
- Long cast alu spool



HALF PRICE

RRP £99.99 **GP £50**

okuma 8K SURF

The Okuma 8K has been designed and built to stand up to the roughest anglers fishing in severe conditions around the UK coastline. If the look of the 8K doesn't convince you, simply take a look at the specifications. The 18kg drag is massive and combined with other features such as durable brass gears and other stainless internals means it can comfortably deal with larger species around the UK as well as dealing with rafts of weed and kelp beds. The 8K is also fitted with an ultra slow oscillation which provides sublime line lay which results in increased distances. Capacity 550 yards of 0.35mm, Ratio 4.7:1



RRP £99.99 **GP £69.99**

SANDSTORM BEACH RODS

The latest versions offer a major upgrade on the blanks offering a far more responsive action and the are much lighter in weight. You really get a lot for you're money.

Bass 11ft 6" 2-4oz RRP £110 **GP £89.99**
Fixed Spool 13ft 6" 3-7oz RRP £165 **GP £139.99**
Multi 13ft 6" 3-7oz RRP £165 **GP £139.99**
Multi 14ft 2" 3-7oz RRP £175 **GP £149.99**



NEW FOR 2020



NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHX SPORT 13ft 11" (125-225g) Heavy - Mixed ..	NORM £595.00 GP £520.00
NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHX SUPERMATCH 13ft 6" (125-200g) Light Heavy - Mixed - Smooth	NORM £570.00 GP £499.00
NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHX MATCH 13ft 6" (125-175g) Mixed - Smooth	NORM £555.00 GP £485.00
NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHX SUPERMATCH LD 13ft (50-150g) Mixed - Smooth..	NORM £530.00 GP £465.00
NEW TIP TORNADO GRAPHX ULTRALITE ST 13ft (50-125g) Smooth	NORM £510.00 GP £445.00
EXCALIBUR TT 14ft 10" (4-8oz)	NORM £685.00 GP £599.00
EXCALIBUR J CURVE 13ft 6" (4-7oz)	NORM £570.00 GP £499.99
EXCALIBUR C CURVE 13ft 10" (4-8oz)	NORM £570.00 GP £499.00
EXCALIBUR SRE (3-7oz)	NORM £600.00 GP £525.00
KOMPRESSOR WR300 13ft (4-8oz)	NORM £625.00 GP £549.00
KOMPRESSOR SUPER SPORT SS 13ft 10" (4-8oz)	NORM £540.00 GP £475.00
KOMPRESSOR SPORT S 13ft 10" (4-7oz)	NORM £490.00 GP £430.00
ELIMINATOR T700 15FT (4-7oz)	NORM £485.00 GP £425.00
ELIMINATOR T800 SGT 13ft 6" (4-7oz)	NORM £625.00 GP £525.00
ELIMINATOR T900 SGT 14ft 4" (4-8oz)	NORM £570.00 GP £499.99
ELIMINATOR T1000 14ft 10" (4-8oz)	NORM £625.00 GP £549.00
ELIMINATOR T1200 14ft 10" (5-8oz)	NORM £685.00 GP £599.00
SALVADOR BUSTOS T1200 14ft 4" (5-8oz)	NORM £715.00 GP £625.00
	NORM £715.00 GP £625.00



All Zziplex rods now come with Fuji Black K guides, shrink tube, coasters + rod bag. All professionally finished in house in Zziplex colours Red, White & Blue, but any custom build can be accommodated just call for advice! Note: We can now offer Fuji Titanium Torzite K Guides for the customer that wants the best!

UK'S LEADING STOCKIST OF ZZIPLEX RODS!

Zziplex M4 GT. 13ft 4", 4-8oz A Fast action rod fitted with a glass tip to aid bite registration. One of the best all round fishing rods available. 25mm butt, Equal section.....
Blank £469.99 | Built £549.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £579.99

Zziplex M4 Hi-flex M A clean ground distance fishing rod. If you after getting over that sandbank at range and still want good bite registration, this is the rod for you. Popular with match fishermen. 24mm, equal section.....
Blank £459.99 | Built £539.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £569.99

Zziplex Profile GT. 13ft 3", 4-6oz A wonderfully nice clean ground fishing rod fitted with a glass tip which is ideal when looking for smaller bites. 22mm butt, Equal section.....
Blank £399.99 | Built £479.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £509.99

Zziplex Profile Evo. 13ft 8", 4-7oz This is a very slim fast action rod ideal for distance fishing over clean ground. It's fitted with a stiff tip which makes it better for dealing with larger species. 22mm Butt.....
Blank £389.99 | Built £469.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £499.99

Zziplex TF 50/50. 13ft 4", 4-7oz This is our best selling Zziplex. It's any easy to use clean to mixed ground rod which will deal with most fish that swim around our coast. 23mm butt, equal section.
Blank £359.99 | Built £439.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £469.99

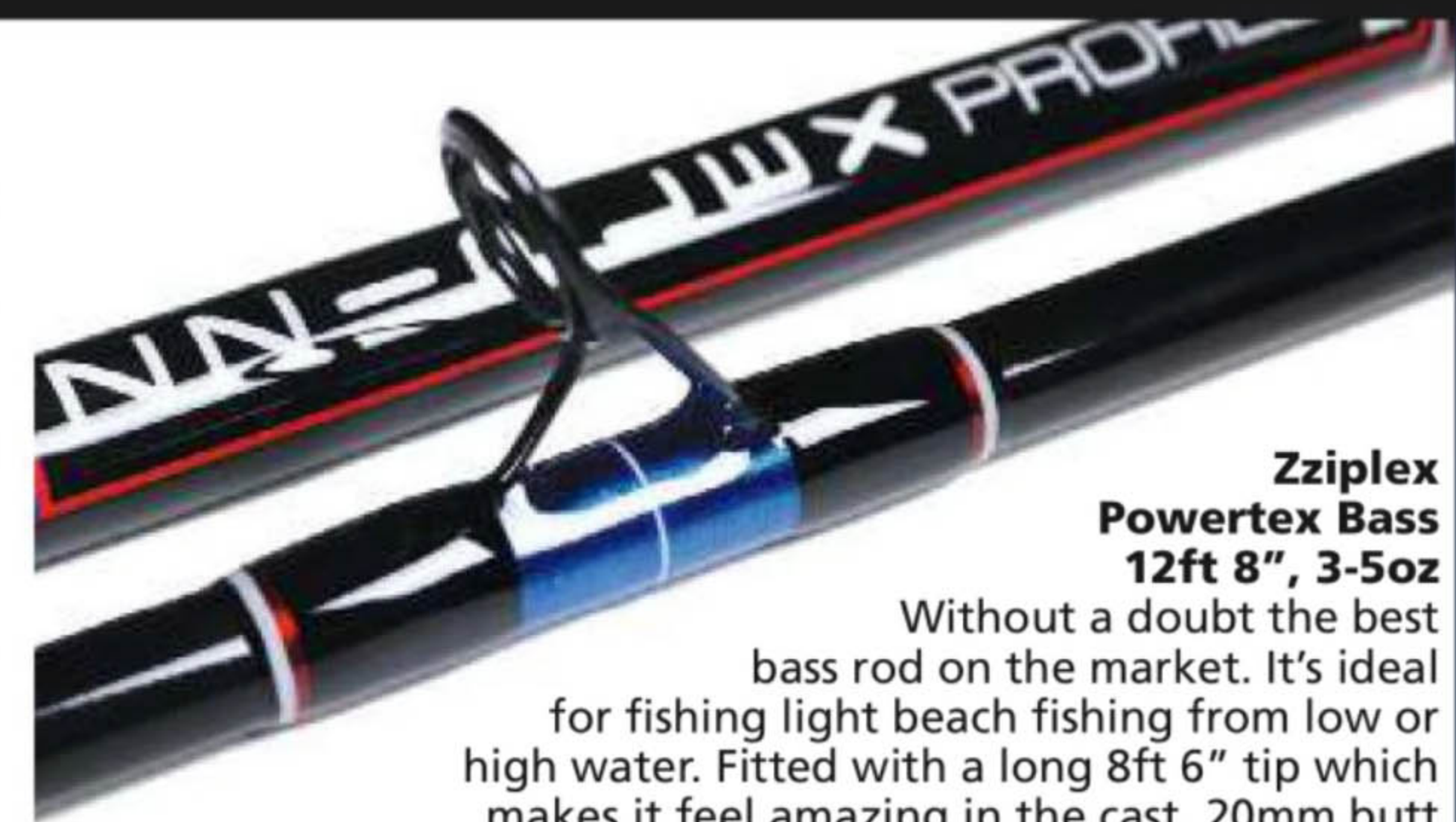
Zziplex Evolution GT. 13ft 4", 4-6oz New for 2016. This rod is just beautiful. It is an ideal summer rod suitable a host of situations over clean and mixed ground. Fitted with a glass tip for better bite registration. 24mm butt, equal section.....
Blank £399.99 | Built £479.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £509.99

Zziplex Evolution CT. 13ft 4", 4-6oz New for 2016. This rod is the same as the Evolution GT but fitted with a carbon tip which is stiffer making it ideal for specimen fish, Rays, Cod, Hounds etc.....
Blank £399.99 | Built £479.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £509.99

Zziplex HSM 13ft 6", 3-7oz HSM stands for 'High Speed Match' and as the name suggests it has a quick recovery but no overly stiff and fitted with a softer tip for great bite registration. 25mm butt, Longer tip.....
Blank £459.99 | Built £539.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £569.99

Zziplex M427 A great mixed to rough ground rod ideal is ideal for winter Cod fishing and Specimen hunting off the rocks throughout the year. Quick recovery. 25mm butt, slightly longer tip.
Blank £469.99 | Built £549.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £579.99

Zziplex M427 Hi-Flex. Designed for the same job as the standard M427 but with a slower recovery. Zziplex M427 SU. Designed with a much stiffer butt section for field work
Blank £469.99 | Built £549.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £579.99



Zziplex Powerflex Bass 12ft 8", 3-5oz
Without a doubt the best bass rod on the market. It's ideal for fishing light beach fishing from low or high water. Fitted with a long 8ft 6" tip which makes it feel amazing in the cast. 20mm butt
Blank £259.99 | Built £339.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £369.99

Zziplex Sea Raider III GT. 10ft, 4-8oz Brand new for 2016. The ultimate uptider? We think so. It's made out of brand new materials and resins to make it more responsive. It also features a glass tip to offer unrivalled bite registration.....
Blank £199.99 | Built £279.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £299.99

Zziplex Equal Section Bass Rod GT (Glass Tip) 11ft 8". 2-4oz
The soft tip gives beautiful bite registration and allows soft bait to be thrown a little harder without coming off. This will become one of the most sold rods of all time we are sure.....
Blank £259.99 | Built £339.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £369.99

Zziplex Equal Section Bass Rod CT (Carbon Tip) 11ft 8". 2-5oz
Slightly stiffer tip than the GT version, still with great bite registration, better for stonger tides. This will become one of the most sold rods of all time we are sure.....
Blank £259.99 | Built £339.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £369.99

Zziplex Trinity CT 14ft 4" 4-6oz Probably the best all round 3 piece rod we have seen. Ideal for clean to mixed ground when distance is key with a simple overhead cast. Slim, responsive and sits well in the tide.....
Blank £439.99 | Built £519.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £539.99

Zziplex Trinity GT 14ft 4" 3-5oz Designed as a true continental for casting softer baits extreme distance with an over head thump. The glass tip provides some of the best bite indication you can get in a beach rod.....
Blank £439.99 | Built £519.99 | BUILT BY CHRIS DANCE £539.99

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UK'S LARGEST SELECTION OF NORWAY FISHING TACKLE

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DAIWA KENZAKI TRAVEL BOAT RODS

The NEW Super Kenzaki Range is Noticeably lighter and very well balanced with substantial power in reserve. All the new rods transmit a remarkable feel though the rod with a degree of sensitivity that enhances all that is going on under the water. Quality grips and reel seat and braid friendly guides.

4 piece 12-20lb	4 piece 20-30lb
4 piece 30-50lb	3 piece 40-60lb
RRP £150	GP £129.99

DAIWA TOURNAMENT 4PC BOAT RODS

Unique carbon technology HVF (High Volume Fibre) makes the rod lighter - 320g but X45 technology and the v-joint keep the blank nice and stiff. Two models in the four piece range the lighter 15-25lb great for most aspects of fishing. 25-40lb version for when you need that bit more grunt.

7ft 6" 15-25lb	RRP £195	GP £164.99
7ft 6" 25-40lb	RRP £195	GP £164.99

PENN RAMPAGE 2 BOAT RODS

4 Piece Travel Rods Built using a special mix of 24-ton carbon, these 4-piece, lightweight, slim diameter blanks feature a modern fast taper action with supple tip. Supplied in carry tube.

	12/20lb 7ft 8"
	20/30lb 7ft 6"
	30/50lb 7ft 4"
	RRP £84.99
	GP £69.99

SEIGLER FISHING REELS

SMALL GAME LD NARROW
Fast 6-1 ration, cap: 280yds-50lb braid (0.30mm), weighs 10.95gms. Perfect small braid reel.
NORM £399.99 GP £339.99

SMALL GAME LD
Fast 6-1 ration, cap: 330yds-50lb braid (0.30mm), weighs 10.95gms perfect smallish braid reel
LEFT/RIGHT HAND NORM £399.99 GP £339.99

LARGE GAME LD
Fast 6-1 ration, cap: 500yds-30lb mono or 600yds x 60lb braid (0.30mm), weighs 20.2gms, all round size, wrecking-sharking etc, big fish mono or braid reel.
LEFT/RIGHT HAND NORM £439.99 GP £389.99

BEHR PILKEN CHROME

These Banana shaped pirk's are deadly. They have an irresistible action as they fall through the water when jigged they flutter and tumble due to their unique banana shape. Quality fitting and trebles.

350G	GP £5.49	400G	GP £5.99	500G	GP £6.49
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SAVAGE GEAR 3D OCTOPUS

Ultra realistic soft lure which is deadly for large halibut. 22cm 300g 1 per pkt, complete with 8/0. Cols: brown glow, UV pink glow, UV orange glow
GP £18.99

WESTIN LURES

WESTIN CRAZY DAISY

Supplied with 1 paddle tail and 1 flutter tail plus 1 main hook and 1 assist treble. Cols: Lively Gadus, Robo Cod, Blue Pearl, Rainbow, Glow Gadus, Mack.
300g 23cm RRP £17.99 GP £16.99
400g 27cm RRP £19.99 GP £18.99

WESTIN SANDY ANDY 300G 28CM

The most realistic Sandeel ever. Complete with 1 spare body. 9/0 single hook
Colours: Pearl/blue, Fancy cola cacao, Robocod, Glow gadus, Tobis Ammo, Motoroil gadus

Glow gadus	Fancy cola cacao
Robocod	Motoroil gadus
Pearl/blue	Tobis Ammo

WESTIN BIG BOB 480G 30CM

For Big Fish. Supplied with 1 10/0 main hook and 1 assisted treble. Cols: Lively Gadus, Blue Glamour, Robo Cod, Rainbow.
RRP £19.99 GP £18.99

DAIWA D WOLF SHADS

D WOLF DUCKFIN BIG SHADS 480G, 24CM

Designed specifically for Cod and Halibut in Nordic waters the D Wolf shads features Daiwa's Duckfin paddletail design which immitates distressed fish. Each lure is fitted with a 10/0 single hook out of the top and a 8/0 treble on braided line attached to the bottom.

RRP £24.99
GP £19.99

D WOLF CURLY BIG SHAD 260G, 21CM

The shad features a uniquely designed curl tail which produces an alluring action which is absolutely deadly to any predatory fish in sight. Featuring an 8/0 single hook out of the top and a 7/0 treble on a heavy assist from the bottom.

RRP £21.99
GP £16.99

